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MAY 2020

“Seventy-five years ago this month, Nazi Germany surrendered to the Allies, bringing to a close the European war. **VE Day** witnessed an outpouring of joy across the UK, although emotions were mixed as many were reminded of the sacrifices that had been made and the uncertain future that awaited. In this month’s **VE Day special supplement**, we explore the moment of victory from several perspectives. What were the most crucial factors in Allied victory? How were the final months of battle experienced across the continent? And, what did it mean for Britain to fight a war whose conclusion was so hard to predict? Plus, relive the moment of victory itself, told through the voices of soldiers and civilians who experienced it.

If May 1945 was a time of uncertainty, then so, of course, is today, as evidenced by the fact that I’m writing these words on my dining room table and not in our office. Clearly many others will be facing far more substantial challenges, and we wish all of you the best for the next few months as the **coronavirus crisis** is brought under control. Hopefully you’ll find some diversion in this month’s magazine, in which there are articles on **medieval magic**, the 19th-century Corn Law crisis, Charles II’s mistresses and a whole lot more. And if you’re looking for further historical diversion, do check out **historyextra.com** for a wealth of articles and podcasts on a wide array of topics.

Enjoy the issue and do look out for June’s edition, where we’ll be marking the magazine’s 20th birthday.

Rob Attar
Editor

THIS ISSUE’S CONTRIBUTORS

Linda Porter
Of course Charles II wasn’t the first monarch to have had mistresses, but his tally far outweighs that of Henry VIII, for example, as does his tally of children. You have to hand it to him: he really didn’t care what people thought.
Linda discusses Charles II’s mistresses on page 52

David Nash
My research into irrationality after the First World War has revealed that manners, behaviour, belief and culture were questioned by the populace at large, with some surprising results.
David charts the allure of spiritualism following the First World War on page 39

Catherine Rider
Reading the King Arthur stories as a child sparked my fascination with medieval magic. I’m particularly interested in how beliefs about magic that often seem outlandish to modern eyes made sense to medieval people.
Catherine chronicles the medieval obsession with magic on page 44

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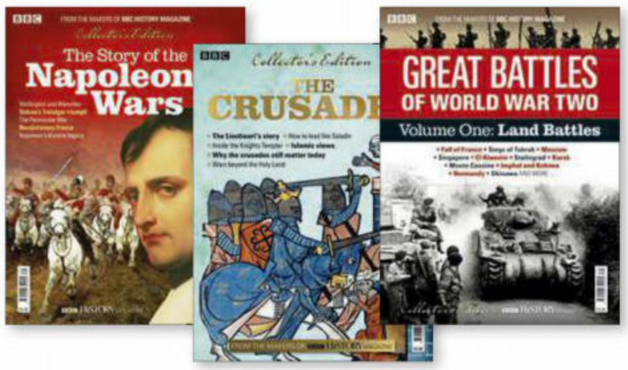
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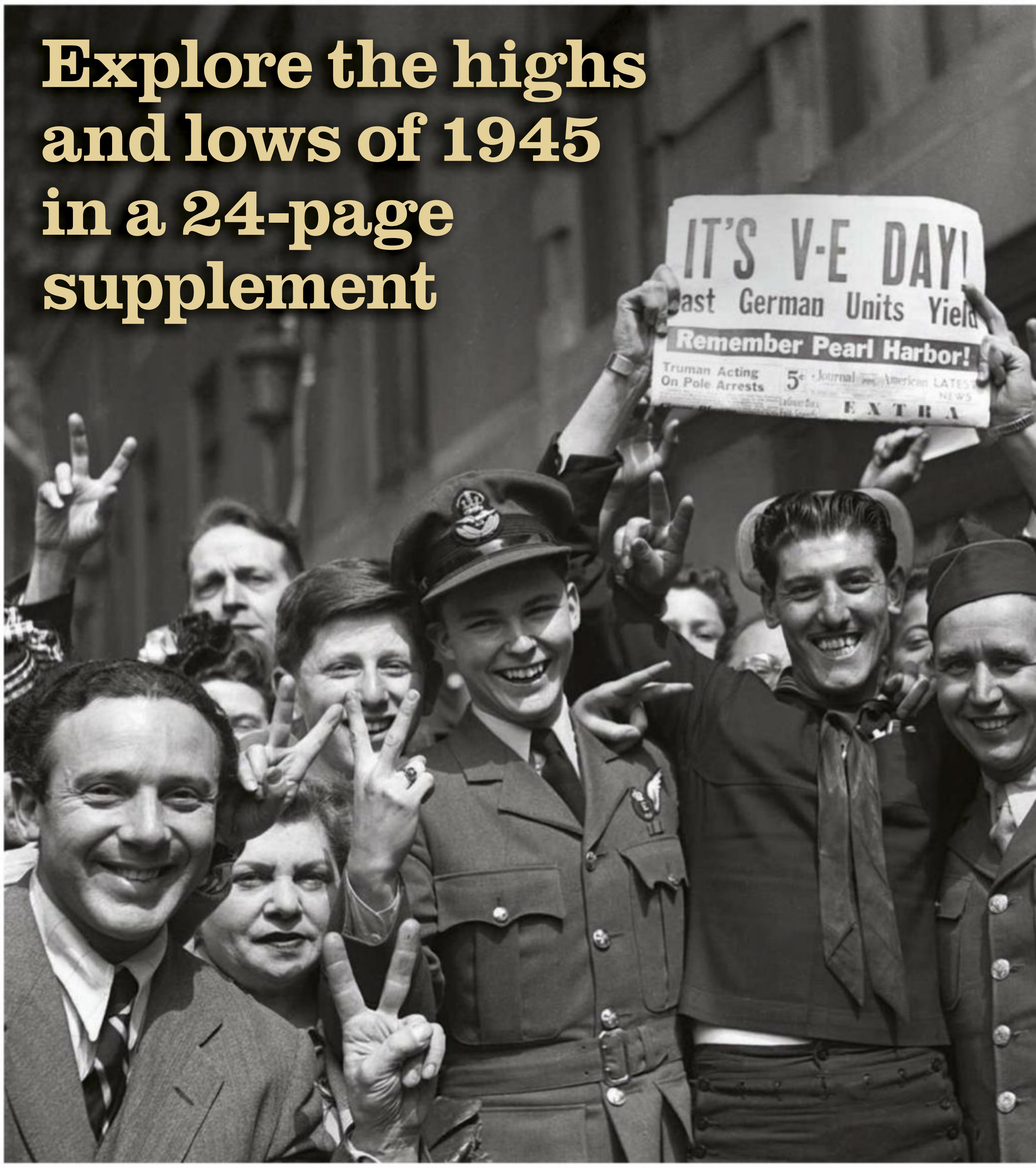

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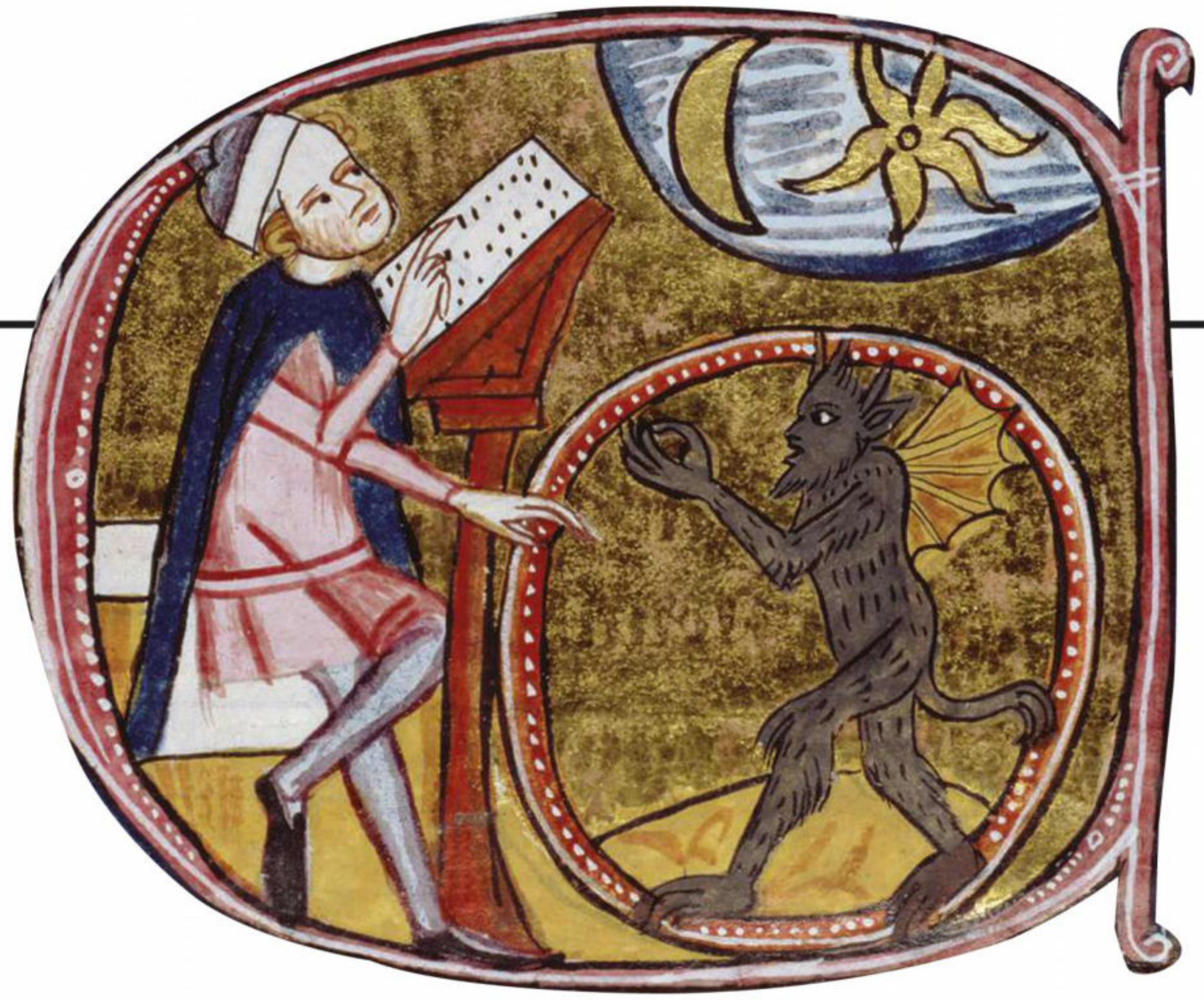

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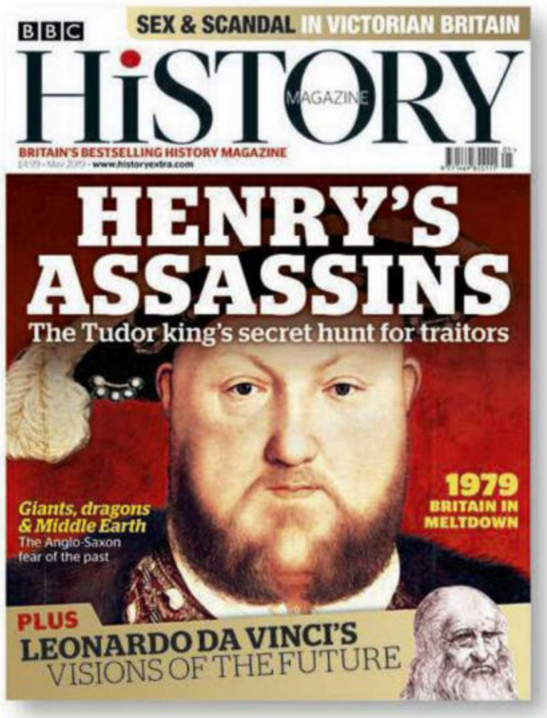
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THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

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Miniature marvels

An 18th-century dolls' house has returned to the country mansion that inspired its creation following a £100,000 restoration project. The artefact, modelled on Nostell Priory in West Yorkshire, was repaired by specialists from the National Trust's conservation studio. As well as cleaning the house's intricate figures and furniture, experts also uncovered several hidden features, including a servants' bell. The restored dolls' house was unveiled in March, but the Nostell estate has since closed along with the rest of the Trust's properties due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Have a story? Please email Jon Bauckham at jon.bauckham@immediate.co.uk

TALKING POINTS

Early modern time travels

A Twitter discussion in which historians shared their favourite years of the 16th and 17th centuries was a welcome distraction from the gloom of 2020, writes **ANNA WHITELOCK**

In the midst of the great global challenges of the present, sometimes pondering the past offers welcome relief, if not its own controversy. And so, when **Eleanor Rycroft** (@EarlyModernista) asked: "What's your favourite year of the 16th or 17th century and why?", Twitter keenly went time travelling.

Greg Walker (@gregmw4), who has written widely on Tudor literary culture, was quick off the mark, writing: "1529... The year in which it all kicked off – and [John] Heywood wrote three plays about it all."

Soon afterwards, **Andrea Zuvich** (@17thCenturyLady), whose Twitter handle clearly demonstrates a strong early modern bias, declared that her favourite year was 1677 due to the "fabulous fashion, good music, good theatre" and the royal wedding of William of Orange and Princess Mary.

Some suggestions were perhaps unsurprising, with **Linda Porter** (@DrLindaPorter1) pointing to the birth of the English republic in 1649, and other historians, such as **Janice Liedl** (@jliedl), picking 1536 due to the simple fact that it was marked by so much "Tudor messiness".

However, some less well-known political events were highlighted by the likes of **Birgitte Breemerkamp** (@The_Birg), who chose 1566, when Elizabeth I reflected on womanhood in her 'petticoat speech' to parliament, while **Derek Crosby** (@DerekMCrosby) selected 1549, the year of Robert Kett's rebellion against the enclosure policies of Edward VI.

Elsewhere, **Rebecca Mason** (@rmason717) opted for 1607, explaining her choice rather succinctly: "Flight of the earls in Ireland. Prelude to shit really hitting the fan in Ulster."

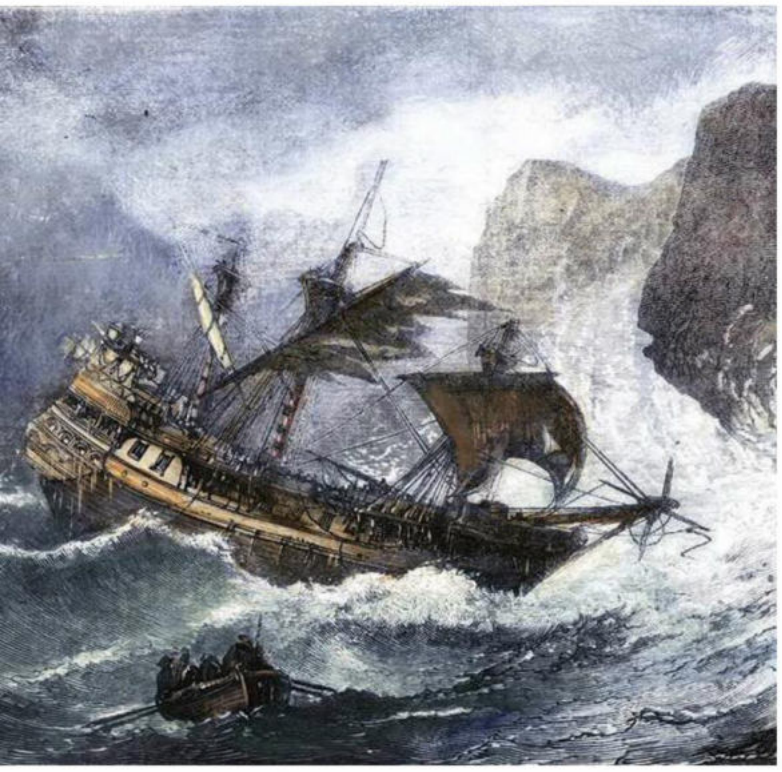
On the more unusual end of the spectrum, **Andy Millen** (@Ronniesoak) made a persuasive case for 1598, because it was when the bizarrely named "Unless-Jesus-Christ-Had-Died-For-Thee-Thou-Hadst-Been-Damned Barebone was born". In a similar vein, **Paul Belford** (@PaulBelford) said he was torn between 1610, when privateer Sir George Somers "died from a surfeit of pork" after being shipwrecked on Bermuda, and 1615, "when Sir Basil Brooke acquired a patent for steelmaking and built the first steelworks in England at Coalbrookdale".

However, it only seems fair to give the Twitter user purporting to be the painter **Peter Paul Rubens** (@PP_Rubens) the final word: "1628. I was in Spain, hanging out with Velazquez, copying Titians. Warm weather, good food. Excellent year!" Well, who can argue with that? 🅷

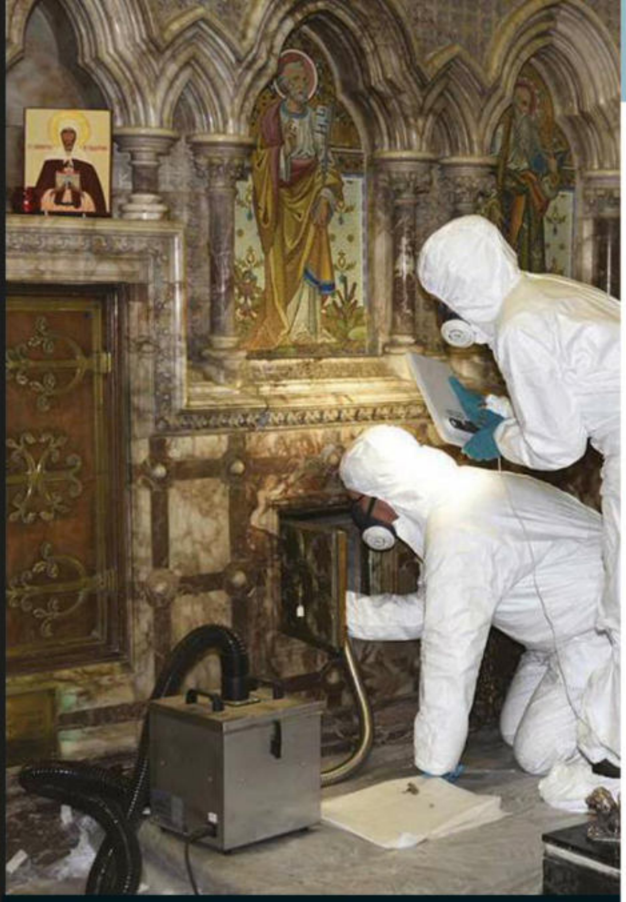
Join the debate at **twitter.com/historyextra**

Anna Whitelock is head of history at Royal Holloway, University of London

> **Some historians picked 1536 due to the simple fact it was marked by so much 'Tudor messiness'**



A depiction of the shipwreck that left Sir George Somers stranded on Bermuda, where he established a colony and died in 1610



The remains of Eanswythe, who died in her teens or early 20s, were carefully removed by experts

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ANGLO-SAXONS

Saint's bones found inside Kent church

Skeletal remains found hidden inside a Folkestone parish church "almost certainly" belonged to the town's patron saint, experts have confirmed.

Following months of analysis, archaeologists are now confident that bones from the church of St Mary & St Eanswythe are those of St Eanswythe herself – an Anglo-Saxon princess who established one of England's first monastic communities.

As well as belonging to a young woman who died in the seventh century, the results also indicate that the deceased enjoyed a diet typically eaten by someone of high status.

The bones were first discovered inside the north wall of the church in 1885, presumably having been hidden to avoid the widespread destruction of relics during the Reformation.

However, suspicions that the bones were medieval fakes persisted for more than a century, leading to the launch of the Finding Eanswythe project in 2017.

Following support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, experts from Canterbury Christ Church University were given permission to remove the bones and establish their authenticity.

"Our work has allowed us to construct a fuller biography of Eanswythe's life and death," said Dr Ellie Williams, an osteologist who served on the project. "Further analyses are under way, and it is hoped we will soon know more about this woman, who is such an important part of Folkestone's history." 🅷

HISTORY IN THE NEWS

A selection of the stories hitting the **history headlines**

HS2 uncovers railway relic

Archaeologists have discovered what they believe to be the remains of the world's first railway roundhouse in Birmingham. The buried remnants, including the central turntable, inspection pits and exterior wall, were discovered near the site of the city's former Curzon Street station, which is being rebuilt as a terminus for the HS2 network. Experts say that the roundhouse – designed by railway pioneer Robert Stephenson – was first brought into operation in 1837, before being demolished later in the 19th century.

The roundhouse was excavated ahead of construction work on a new terminus for the HS2 rail project

Vatican opens archives of Holocaust-era pope

The archives of controversial wartime pope Pius XII have been made publicly available for the first time.

Spanning approximately 16 million pages, the vast cache of letters and documents was opened to researchers on 2 March, a year after the move was first announced by Pope Francis in 2019.

The material, which spans the duration of Pius XII's papacy (1939–58), may shed new light on the pontiff's activities during the Second World War, when he was accused of turning a blind eye to Nazi atrocities.

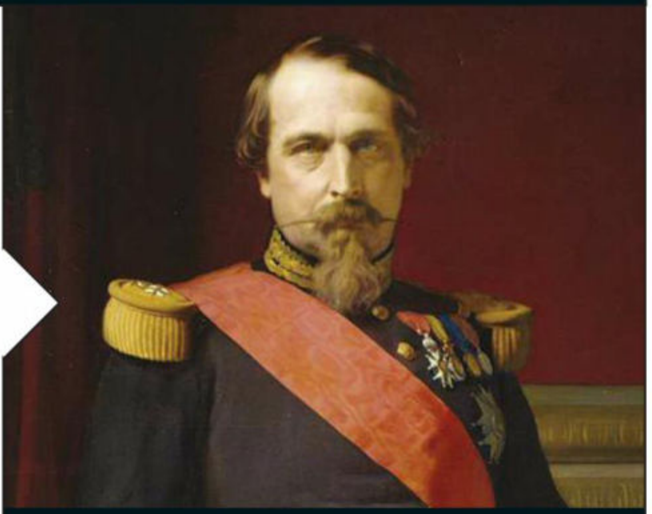
Researchers who intend to study the documents include scholars from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC, as well as the German historian Hubert Wolf, who has previously written about the relationship between the Vatican and the Third Reich.

All study spaces within the Vatican Apostolic Archive had been booked until late 2020, but the facility is presently closed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Pius XII, who was born Eugenio Pacelli in 1876, has been dubbed 'Hitler's pope' by some critics

New bid for emperor's return

A French historian is calling upon the UK government to return the remains of Napoleon III as part of Brexit negotiations. Dimitri Casali says repatriation of the body, which is buried in Hampshire, would be an "elegant gesture of reconciliation". The emperor, who ruled the second French empire between 1852 and 1870, was exiled to Britain after being captured during the Franco-Prussian War. He died in 1873 and was buried in Chislehurst, Kent, before being moved to a tomb in Farnborough.



Napoleon III (1808–73) was the son of Louis I, King of Holland, and the nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte

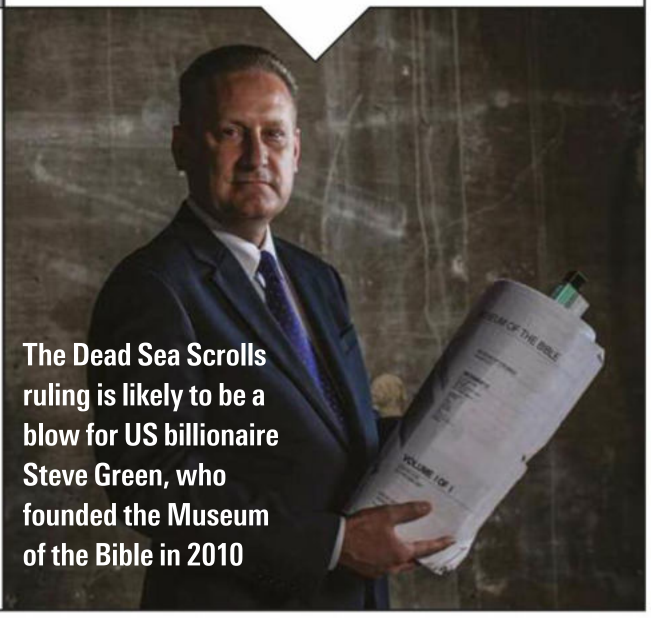
Music has been banned at the sixth-century Hagia Sophia since its conversion to a mosque in 1453

Cathedral's choir sings again

Choral singing at Istanbul's Hagia Sophia has been 'heard' for the first time in more than 500 years. US academics Bissera Pentcheva and Jonathan Abel managed to map the acoustics of the former cathedral – where music is now banned – by popping balloons throughout the building and recording the results. Using information from the 'pops', they created a digital filter that can make other recordings sound as if they were performed inside the building. A choir has since recorded an album using the tool. H

Museum scrolls are "forgeries"

A US museum's prized collection of Dead Sea Scroll fragments has been ruled as fake by a team of art fraud investigators. After extensive scientific analysis, the 16 items on display at the Museum of the Bible in Washington DC were found to be deliberate forgeries, possibly made from old shoe leather. The items were purchased from a larger set of fragments that first appeared on the market in 2002, more than 50 years after the genuine Hebrew artefacts were discovered inside a cave in the West Bank.



The Dead Sea Scrolls ruling is likely to be a blow for US billionaire Steve Green, who founded the Museum of the Bible in 2010

HS2/GETTY IMAGES

Socialism: an American tale

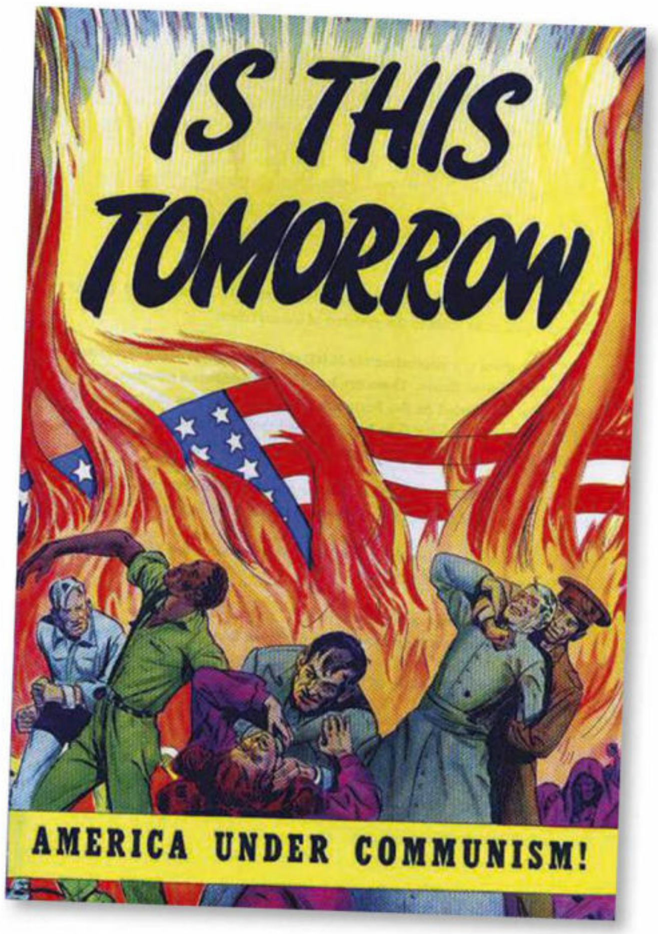
Bernie Sanders' early successes in the Democratic primaries signalled the American left's re-emergence as an electoral force. But, writes **IWAN MORGAN**, socialism's influence on US culture has long outweighed its impact at the ballot box

During the early stages of this year's Democratic primaries, Bernie Sanders emerged as a serious contender for victory – and in the process gave democratic socialism a visibility it has not enjoyed for years.

The Vermont senator's proposals include healthcare that's free at the point of delivery, free tuition at public colleges and a 'Green New Deal' to convert electricity and transportation to renewable energy within 10 years. And – as his emergence as one of the leading contenders to win the nomination has proved – it is a manifesto with considerable appeal. Sanders has built his success on the backing of millennials, whose political consciousness was shaped by the failure of capitalism in the 2007–09 financial crisis, and on the Democratic left's growing conviction that only radical measures can ensure a fairer economy. He was assisted in his bid by the splintering of the moderate vote behind a number of centrist candidates – until centre-left former vice-president Joe Biden emerged as his chief rival.

Whether Sanders' campaign propels him to the presidency or not, its success demands a reassessment of socialism's place in modern US history – which is far more significant than the media, the Democratic establishment and the American right are prepared to acknowledge.

In electoral terms, socialism has had less impact on the United States than any other western industrial nation. But socialist candidates haven't always flopped at the polls. In 1912, Eugene Debs won 900,000 votes (6 per cent of the total ballots) as the presidential candidate for the Socialist Party of America (SPA), attracting support from trade unionists, German Americans and populist western farmers. The next five years represented something of a golden age for the SPA – it elected two congressmen, dozens of state legislators, and more than a hundred mayors (Milwaukee, Wisconsin was its greatest urban stronghold). However, the party's unpopular opposition to US involvement in the First World War, and factional splits over the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, sent it into decline. In the 1920 presidential election, Debs again won 900,000 votes, but this represented just 3.4 per cent of ballots. SPA hopes for a revival in the Depression fell foul of Franklin D Roosevelt's popularity. Its candidate won a minuscule 0.4 per cent of votes cast in the 1936 presidential election – a share that fell to 0.2 percent in 1940.



Red peril Anti-communist propaganda from 1920, in the midst of the first Red Scare, which saw many socialists imprisoned

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> As the Cold War loomed, a Red Scare targeted supposed Soviet subversives in government, the labour movement, universities and entertainment

A laboratory for ideas

Away from the ballot box, however, socialism's political influence has been profound. The SPA was a laboratory for policy ideas that found their way into both Democratic and Republican agendas. In 1980, celebrated conservatives Milton and Rose Friedman observed that "almost every plank" in its 1928 presidential platform, ranging from public administration of natural resources to elimination of child labour, became law in the ensuing half-century. Most significantly, the social security programme, created by Roosevelt and expanded by Democratic and Republican successors, traced its intellectual pedigree to socialists William Leiserson, Edwin Witte and in particular Selig Perlman, during their service on the United States Commission on Industrial Relations research division from 1912 to 1915. Witte went on to become the principal drafter of the Social Security Act of 1935, the cornerstone of the American welfare state.

The influence of socialists was also evident beyond the

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Making a point
Bernie Sanders at a news conference in Vermont, 11 March. Sanders' success has been "built on the support of millennials whose politics were shaped by the financial crisis of 2007–09", writes Iwan Morgan

REUTERS

corridors of power. In the early 20th century, Emma Goldman, Rose Pastor Stokes and Margaret Sanger promoted birth control to improve women's welfare. Socialists responded to their repression in the First World War by helping establish the American Civil Liberties Union in 1920. In 1909, WEB Du Bois and other socialists were instrumental in establishing the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the US's foremost civil rights organisation. Half a century on, Martin Luther King shrouded his Christian socialism during his early campaigning but grew more critical of America's racism and imperialism in his final years.

Socialists were also deeply embedded in the nation's cultural life, exemplified by bestselling early 20th-century novelists Theodore Dreiser, Jack London and Upton Sinclair; later writers who underwent socialist phases like Norman Mailer, Arthur Miller and Walter Mosley; and musical talents such as Aaron Copland, Woody Guthrie and *The Wizard of Oz* lyricist Yip Harburg.

So why, given its cultural impact, has US socialism failed to gain the mainstream acceptance it has achieved in western Europe? Writing in the mid-20th century, so-called 'consensus historians' attributed its failure to the appeal of the American Dream. To them, this matched everything Marxism could offer, and bettered it: a classless society, opportunities for the talented, and a more comfortable material life (in the present, rather than just the future). But such rosy assumptions did not survive the racial, gender and class discords of the 1960s and beyond. They also underestimated the significance of government repression of the American left.

Unwarranted fears that the Soviet Bolsheviks were fomenting revolution in America precipitated the Red Scare of 1919–20, which led to the imprisonment of many socialists and the deportation of those who lacked citizenship. Eugene Debs, sentenced in 1918 to 10 years for inciting resistance to the draft, fought the 1920 presidential election as a federal penitentiary inmate.

A quarter of a century later, as the Cold War loomed, a second Red Scare targeted supposed subversives accused of working for the Soviet Union or of harbouring communist sympathies. This prompted purges in government, universities, the labour movement and the entertainment world.

Terrified that the stigma of being branded a communist sympathiser would destroy their professional careers, some socialist victims of the first Red Scare (such as the prominent economist Selig Perlman) recanted their faith. This pattern was repeated in the second scare: the author Betty Friedan removed all mention of her socialist past from *The Feminine Mystique*, her bestselling tract that helped launch second-wave feminism.

Republicans have routinely sought to discredit left-leaning Democrats by accusing them of socialistic impulses. This began in the 1930s when Herbert Hoover led the charge against Roosevelt's New Deal, and has continued into the modern age. Conservatives pilloried Barack Obama for seeking to 'promote socialism' in the wake of the 2007–09 financial crisis, especially when he passed the Affordable Care Act ('Obamacare') in 2010.

Anticipating a Sanders presidential candidacy, the Conservative Political Action Conference, under whose banner hundreds of American conservative groups meet annually, invoked a third Red Scare by naming its 2020 convention 'America v Socialism'. This will likely be a major line of attack in Donald Trump's election campaign – even if, as looks likely, the Democrat facing him is Sanders' rival for the nomination, Joe Biden. But will voters look beyond the propaganda and see that socialism is not the political virus of conservative imagination but a full-fledged part of America's political tradition? That remains to be seen. H

Iwan Morgan is professor of US Studies at the Institute of the Americas, University College London. His book *Reagan: American Icon* is due out in paperback (published by Bloomsbury) in July

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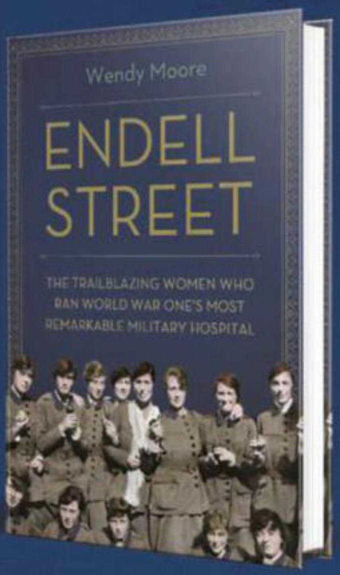
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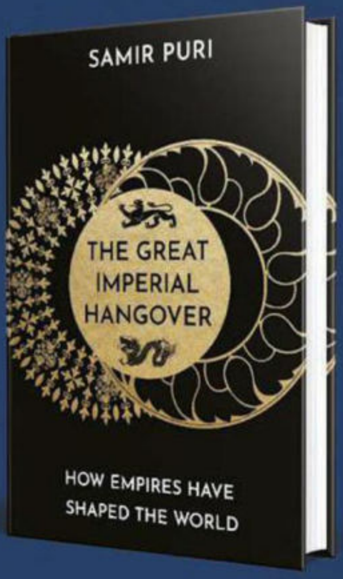
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Photo credit: Child survivors of the Holocaust on their way to the UK. Courtesy of UN Archives and Records Management, New York (Record Group S-1058-0001-01-314).

MICHAEL WOOD ON...
HISTORY THROUGH MUSIC

"Songs distil the essence of how things were, what people really felt"

Strange days! Sitting here in my kitchen thinking about family, friends and neighbours, as it slowly dawns on me that all the events, book festivals and talks I was due to do over the next four months have been cancelled. One of them was a gig at Cecil Sharp House in London, about the English radical song tradition. I was going to do it with the great singer-songwriter Steve Knightley and his band Show of Hands. It was to be an evening of songs from the 14th to the 20th century, from the Peasants' Revolt to the Diggers and Levellers, to the Chartists, suffragettes and beyond – a kind of people's history through song. And, of course, most of the songs are really catchy and rousing, so there is ample opportunity to join in. After all, how natural it is to sing in times of crisis. Don't you love the shots of people serenading each other on their balconies in Italy today?

As an expression of ordinary people's feelings and attitudes, the old songs are portals to that shared past. Our memories of the sufferings of the First World War, for example, still come piercingly to life through the great tunes. And through songs come home truths, the distilled essence of how things really were, what people really felt – the very things historians most hope to capture. Those thoughts came back to me as theatres and music venues closed everywhere and the country went into lockdown. What will we sing through the crisis to help future historians know what we were feeling, thinking and doing? Will we add to famous pieces like 'You Noble Diggers All' by the 17th-century political activist Gerrard Winstanley? Maybe we will only have our Twitter feeds!

One of the songs we were planning to perform at the gig was a Peterloo ballad written by an Ashton weaver called John Stafford, who, though illiterate, became a well-known songwriter in the North West. His song was set to the tune of 'The Wearing of the Green', which was written for the 1798 Irish rebellion against British rule, and published in 1802. The Manchester weaver had set his protest song to the tune of an Irish rebel ballad. That got me thinking about the way music travels. English folk songs, for example, influenced so many musical traditions in the US, including the blues. The first album on the Topic music label, from 1954, by folk singer, activist and collector Ewan MacColl – which included 'Van Diemen's Land', 'The Cutty Wren' and 'Four Loom Weaver' – fertilised the whole world of folk and blues. When a young Bob Dylan stayed in London in 1962, meeting MacColl and hearing those songs made an indelible impression.

I came across a brilliant demonstration of how music can travel across time and space when I was looking for a song for the gig from the Jarrow March of 1936, when a group of unemployed man walked in protest from Tyneside to London. As readers may know, the marchers included a nine-man harmonica band – some were blinded First World War veterans – and they sang many famous tunes from the trenches. I asked Matt Perry at Newcastle University, who ran an exhibition on the march in 2016 in South Shields, if he could provide any examples of songs sung on the march, and he came up with one precious verse of a song called 'Tramp Tramp Tramp! The Boys are Marching'. This was adapted from a piece of music originally composed during the American Civil War by George Root, a Union prisoner in a Confederate jail. And that was, in turn, perhaps based on an old children's skipping song still known on both sides of the Atlantic.

So how did a piece of music from 19th-century America ring out on the long trek between Jarrow and London in 1936? We can't be sure, but the answer may lie in the period when, in a show of support for the fight against slavery in the US, the cotton mill workers of northern England refused to process imported southern cotton. In time, 'Tramp Tramp Tramp' became a football terraces song, which we learned at Old Trafford in our teens – our fans having adapted it from a chant sung by Sunderland supporters.

The Jarrow marchers were later asked to make a gramophone record, which unfortunately never materialised. But reciting the songs they sang more than eight decades ago – with original verses – seemed a wonderful way of bringing back to life a lost people's history. So as you sit at home, deprived of pubs, clubs and bars, concert venues and theatres – the lifeblood of our oral culture – why not try a hearty rendition of 'You Noble Diggers All' or 'Jarrow Song'. Even better, start composing your own music – future historians will be grateful.

Michael Wood is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. He has presented numerous BBC series, and his books include *The Story of England* (Viking, 2010)

ILLUSTRATION BY **FEMKE DE JONG**

ANNIVERSARIES

DOMINIC SANDBROOK highlights events that took place in May in history

10 MAY 1768

Anti-royal protest turns bloody

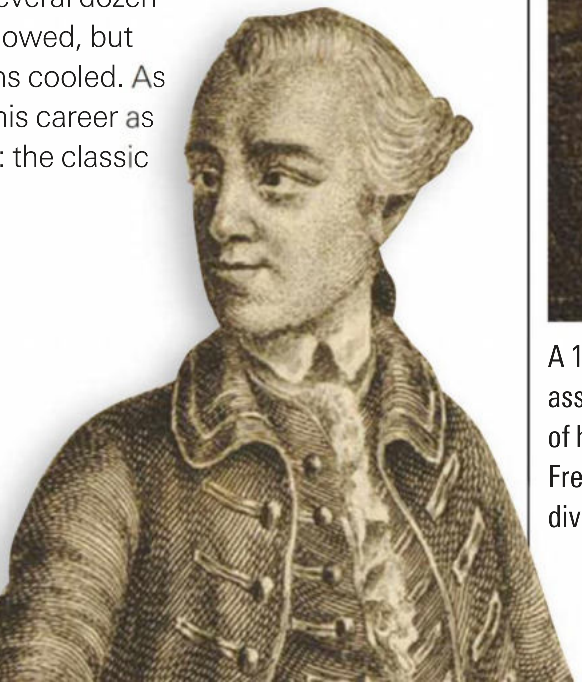
Soldiers fire on supporters of radical John Wilkes in London

In early May 1768, crowds began to gather at St George's Fields, London. After producing increasingly fierce criticisms of George III and his government, the radical journalist John Wilkes had been arrested and imprisoned. To his supporters, it was an outrage. And since St George's Fields were next to the King's Bench Prison, this was the obvious place for a protest.

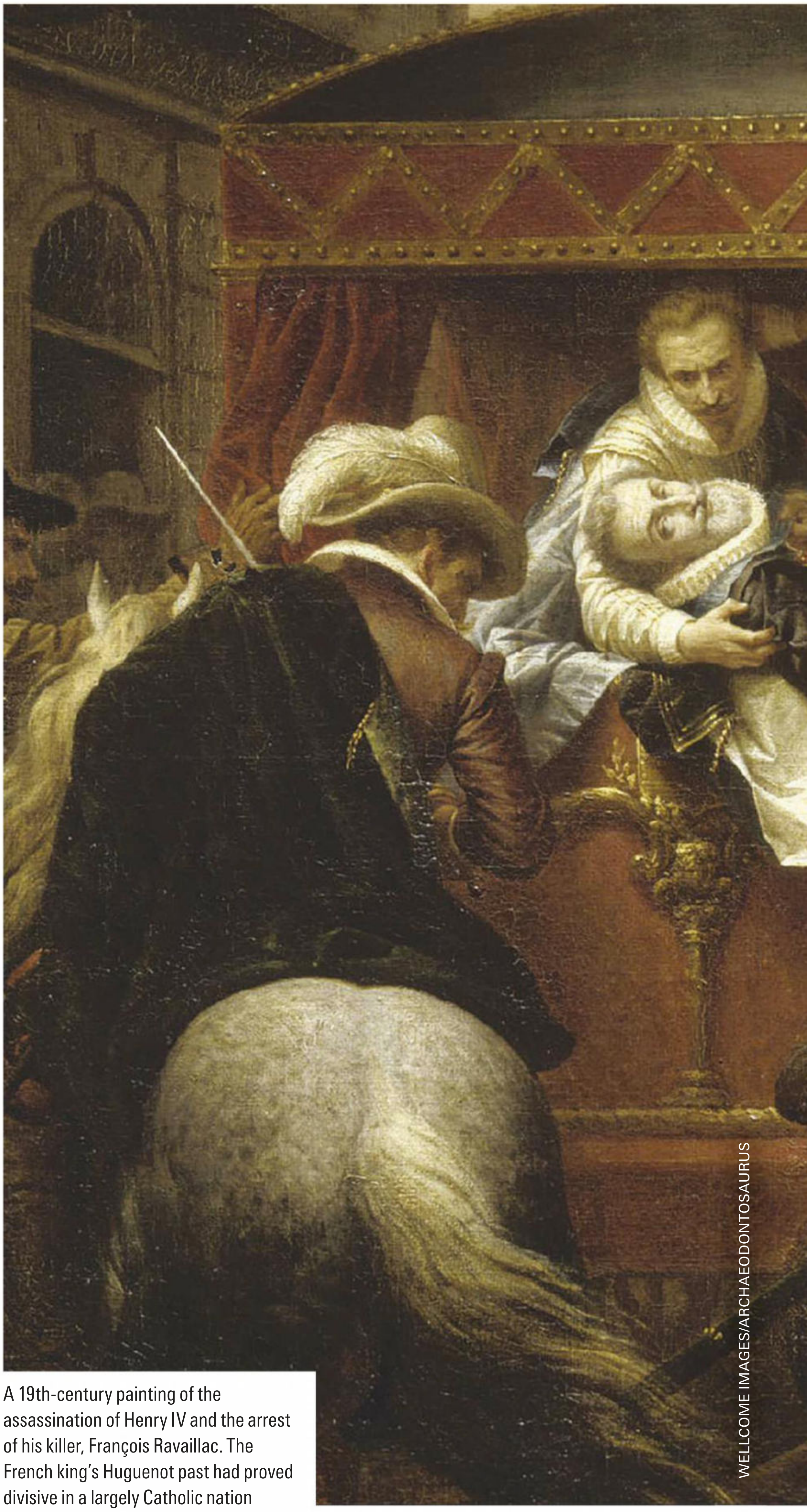
By mid-morning, the crowd was 15,000 strong, chanting "Wilkes and liberty!", "No liberty, no king!" and "Damn the king! Damn the government!" The atmosphere became steadily more aggressive. The justices of the peace called for troops, and a unit of horse grenadiers took up a position in front of the prison. Some of the mob started taunting them, with a man in a red coat being particularly offensive. Three soldiers chased him into an outhouse adjoining the Horseshoe Inn. In the chaos, one of the guards levelled his musket and fired, and a red-clad figure fell. A moment later, they realised their mistake: they had shot the innkeeper's son.

Now the mood turned ugly, and more troops were summoned. The protesters began pelting the soldiers with stones; in return, the soldiers fired into the crowd. More bodies hit the ground. The demonstration had become a bloodbath.

Exactly how many people died at St George's Fields is unknown: perhaps seven or eight, with several dozen injured. More riots followed, but eventually the passions cooled. As for Wilkes, he ended his career as lord mayor of London: the classic radical trajectory.

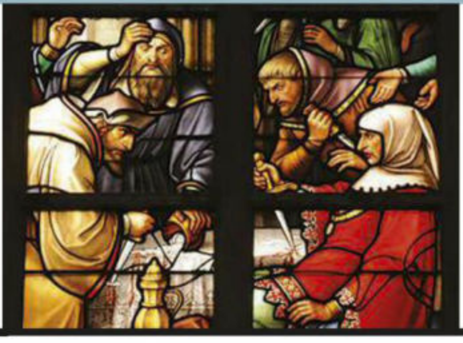


Journalist John Wilkes, whose imprisonment led to demonstrations and the deaths of up to eight at St George's Fields



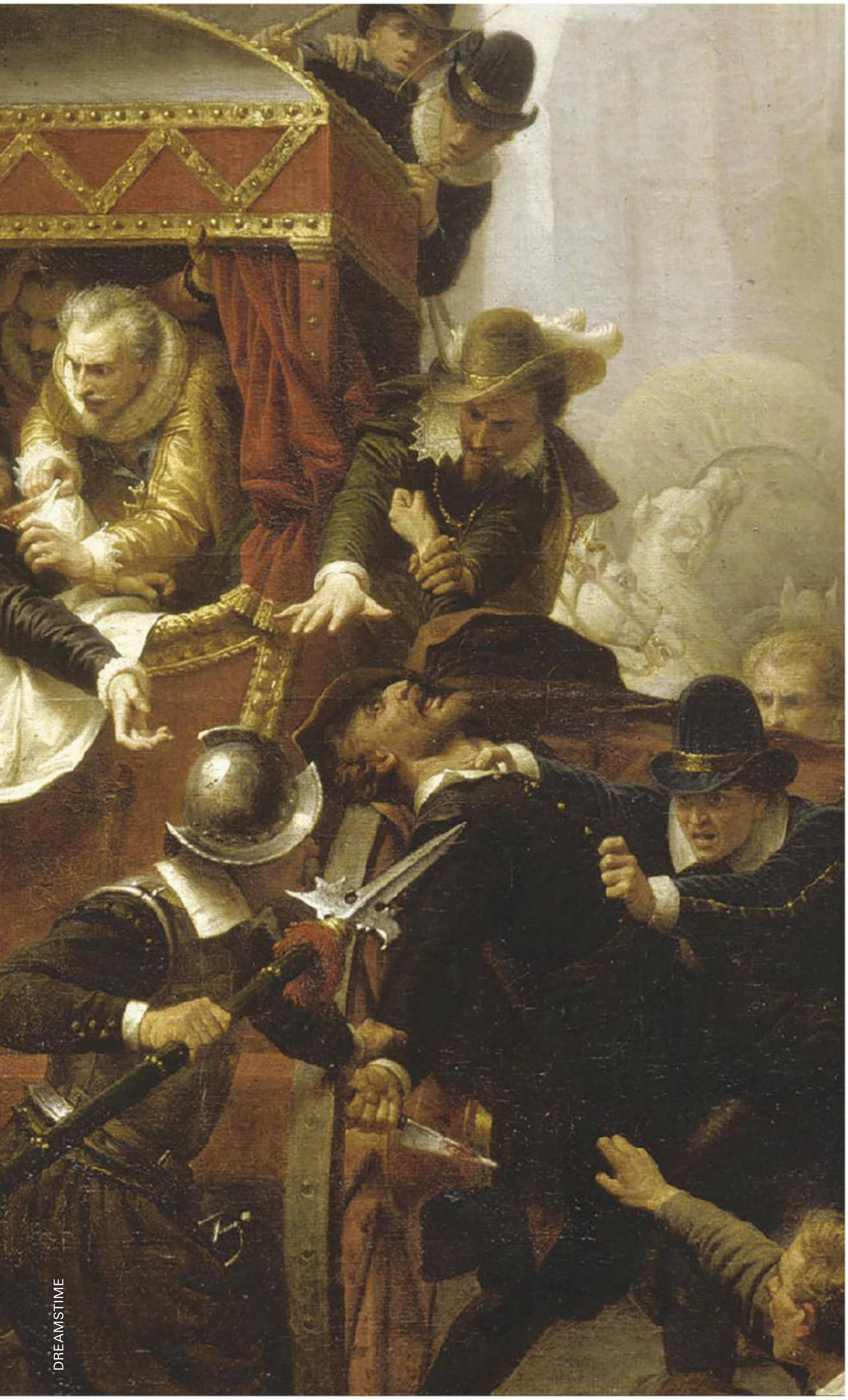
A 19th-century painting of the assassination of Henry IV and the arrest of his killer, François Ravaillac. The French king's Huguenot past had proved divisive in a largely Catholic nation

WELLCOME IMAGES/ARCHAEODONTOSAURUS



22 MAY 1370

In Brussels, allegations that Jews have stolen and abused consecrated Communion hosts (left) trigger a **bloody anti-Semitic pogrom**, with several Jews murdered and countless more driven from their homes.



DREAMSTIME

14 MAY 1610

Henry IV of France is assassinated

Schoolteacher plunges a knife into the controversial monarch

Henry IV of France was no stranger to bloodshed. Having been raised as a Protestant in a largely Catholic country, he had only narrowly escaped death in the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre, and had led the Huguenot armies against the previous king's forces.

After succeeding to the French throne in 1589, he controversially converted to Catholicism in 1593, famously declaring that Paris was worth a Mass. But plenty of people hated him, from Huguenots who saw him as a traitor to Catholics who did not believe his conversion. By the spring of 1610, he had already survived at least a dozen assassination attempts.

On 14 May, Henry's carriage was clattering through the streets of Paris when the wheels suddenly ground to a halt. There was some sort of traffic jam, and the king's party was stuck between a wine merchant's cart ahead and a cart full of hay behind. And it was then that François Ravaillac struck.

A former schoolteacher who claimed to have had holy visions, Ravaillac was a known Catholic fanatic. Three times he had failed to get an audience with the king. Now he seized his chance. Before anybody could react, he ran from the crowd, jumped onto the royal carriage and plunged his knife into Henry's chest.

The king's death horrified France. No less horrifying was what awaited his assassin. Although Ravaillac made no attempt to deny his crime ("I saw the blood on my knife and the place where I hit him"), the authorities tortured him anyway. "Before being drawn and quartered," says one historian, "he was scalded with burning sulphur, molten lead and boiling oil and resin, his flesh then being torn by pincers."

After his execution, watched by a huge crowd, onlookers queued for bits of his body. The Polish nobleman Jakub Sobieski, who was staying in Paris, even reported that one man, "quite dignified, and with a great beard, brought several particles of Ravaillac's corpse and with great fury and anger fried them with eggs and ate them".

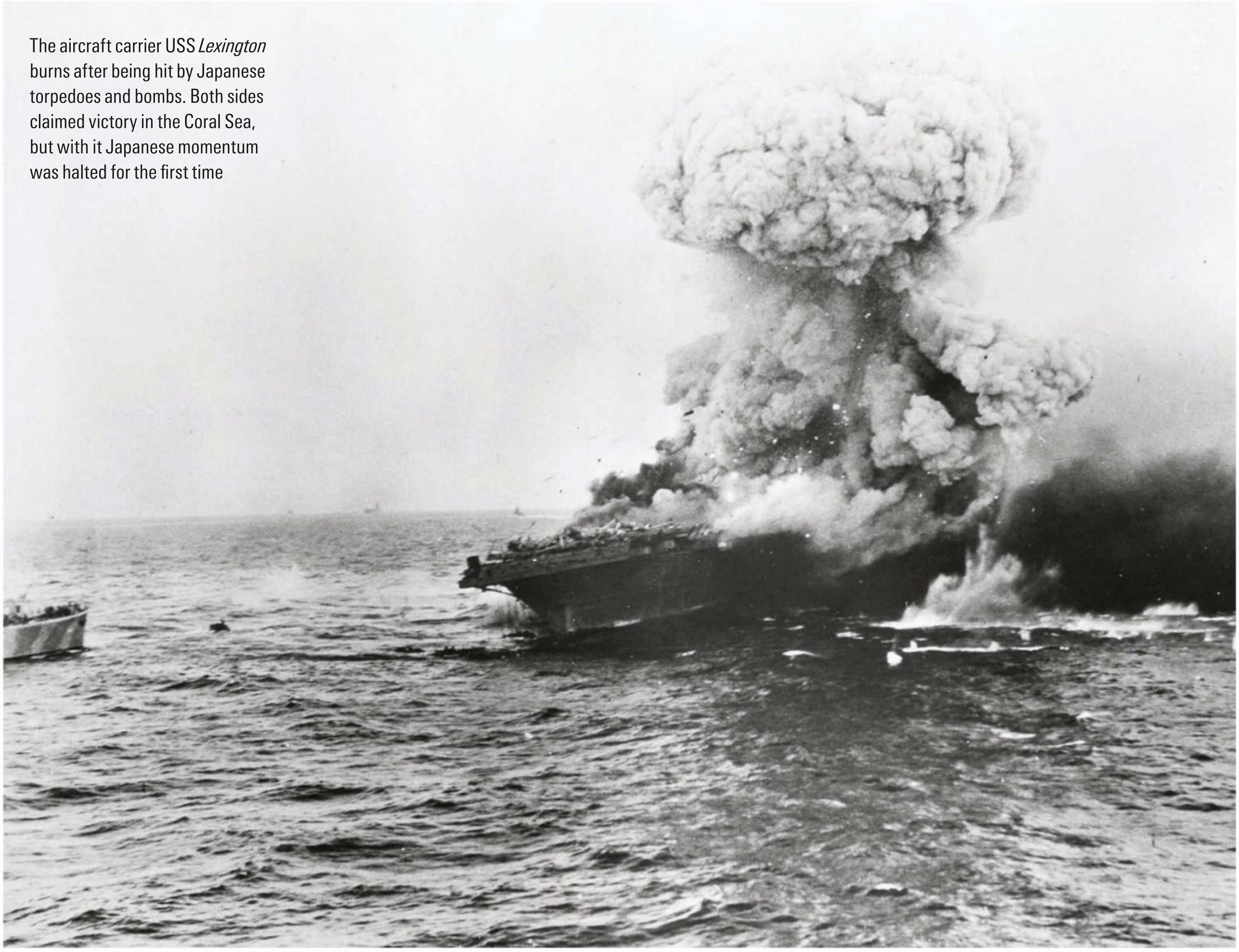
31 MAY 455

Caught fleeing during the Vandals' advance on Rome, **Emperor Petronius Maximus (right) is attacked by a furious mob**. After being pelted with stones, he is finished off by a Roman soldier, who throws his body into the Tiber.

D. N. FL. ANICIVS . MAXIMVS . P. F. AVG.

12 MAY 1937

In a service originally planned for his brother, the abdicating Edward VIII, **George VI is crowned at Westminster Abbey**. For the first time the service is broadcast live on BBC radio, and also filmed for cinema newsreels, with crew obliged to wear evening dress.



The aircraft carrier USS *Lexington* burns after being hit by Japanese torpedoes and bombs. Both sides claimed victory in the Coral Sea, but with it Japanese momentum was halted for the first time

4 MAY 1942

Pacific War pivots in epic sea battle

Japanese advance checked in battle of the Coral Sea

The first great aircraft carrier clash in history, the battle of the Coral Sea was a turning point in the Pacific War. After months of unbroken advances, Japan had struck south, towards the Coral Sea between Australia and New Guinea.

If the Japanese could take Port Moresby on the coast of New Guinea, they would cut off Australia and New Zealand from their US allies. But thanks to their signals intelligence, the Americans were waiting.

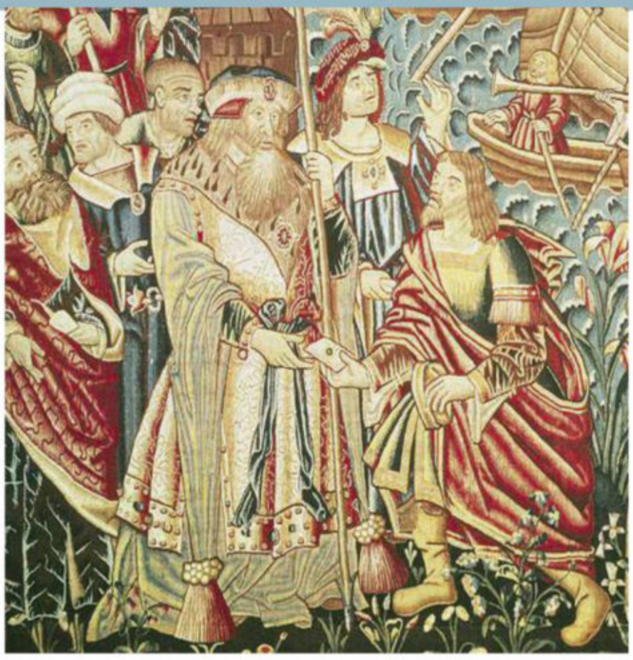
From 4 May, the battle raged for four days, the sea air echoing to the screams of warplanes and the thump of torpedoes. The risks to the pilots were enormous. But on the *Yorktown*, Lieutenant John James Powers exhorted his comrades: "Remember the folks back home are counting on us. I am going to get a direct hit if I have to lay [his bomb] on their flight deck."

The date was 8 May, and as Powers' dive-bomber soared into the air, the sky was a perfect, gleaming blue. His target was the carrier *Shōkaku*, the pride of the Japanese navy. As he saw it in the distance, he began to dive, hurtling lower, lower, lower, through a storm of enemy fire.

A few months later, in a radio address to the nation, President Franklin D Roosevelt described Powers' last moments. "He dived almost to the very deck of the enemy carrier, and did not release his bomb until he was sure of a direct hit," Roosevelt said admiringly. "He was last seen attempting recovery from his dive at the extremely low altitude of 200 feet, amid a terrific barrage of shell and bomb fragments, smoke, flame and debris from the stricken vessel. His own plane was destroyed by the explosion of his own bomb. But he had made good his promise to 'lay it on the flight deck'." The *Shōkaku* was severely damaged and forced to return to Japan for major repairs.

Both sides claimed victory in the Coral Sea. But for the first time the Japanese had been turned back. Their momentum was lost, never to return.

ALAMY/GETTY



A tapestry showing da Gama's arrival in India. The sailors and the locals were mutually unimpressed

BRIDGEMAN/ALAMY

20 MAY 1498

Vasco da Gama lands in Calicut

Portuguese explorer finds coveted trade route to India

The Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama had been at sea for almost a year when, peering through the haze, he glimpsed the buildings of Calicut. His mission was to find a trade route from Lisbon to the great ports of India, with their teeming spice markets. And now, on 20 May 1498, his goal was in sight.

Da Gama's crew was in poor shape, with two-thirds having succumbed to scurvy and other diseases. But that did not stop them forming a pretty low opinion of the Indians who greeted them when they disembarked.

"They are of a tawny complexion. Some of them have big beards and long hair, while others clip their hair short or shave the head, merely allowing a tuft to remain," wrote one Portuguese observer. "They go naked down to the waist, covering their lower extremities with very fine cotton stuffs. But it is only the most respectable who do this, for the others manage as best they are able."

As for the women, the author thought them, "ugly and of small stature". And although the Indians were pleasant enough, they struck him as "covetous and ignorant".

The Indians did not think much of da Gama and his men, either. The presents from the Portuguese king – some cloaks, a box, some hats and so on – fell on very stony ground. And when da Gama left three months later, relations were so embittered that the Portuguese took hostages with them. H

Dominic Sandbrook is a historian. His latest book is *Who Dares Wins: Britain, 1979–1982* (Allen Lane, 2019)

WHY WE SHOULD REMEMBER. . .

Target Zero Day, when smallpox was finally declared eradicated

BY **GARETH WILLIAMS**

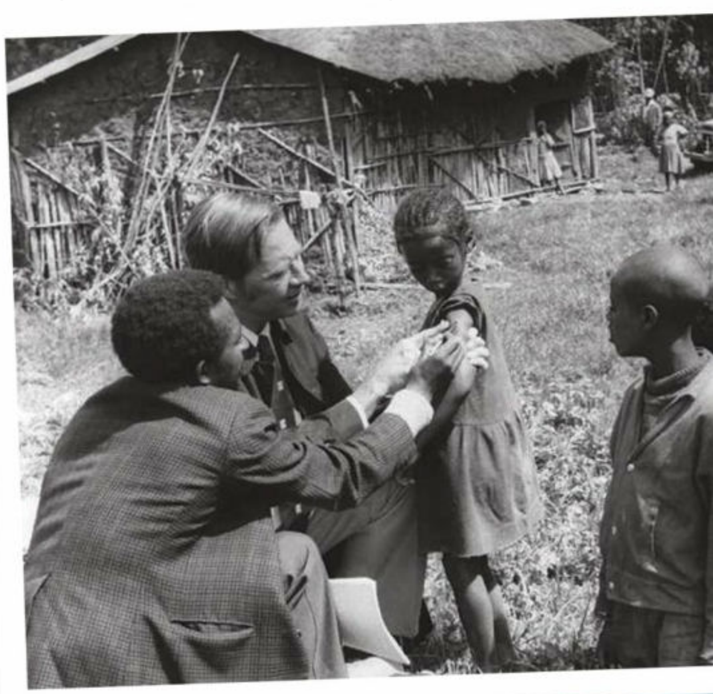
It was a red-letter day in the history of medicine – 'Target Zero Day', 8 May 1980, signified the complete eradication of smallpox, a terrifying scourge that had previously killed one in 12 worldwide. Smallpox was untreatable but, luckily, it turned out that vaccination provided good protection – and that intensive immunisation could exterminate the smallpox virus by blocking its spread.

According to legend, vaccination was invented by Dr Edward Jenner of Berkeley, Gloucestershire. Jenner showed that healthy children inoculated with cowpox, a mild infection of cattle, could not catch smallpox. He was supposedly inspired by a comment from a local milkmaid, but there is evidence the idea came from a medical friend, John Fewster, who had experimented with cowpox. Vaccination goes back even further. In 1774, a Dorset farmer, Benjamin Jesty, inoculated his wife and sons with cowpox; Jesty's experiments were belatedly publicised in 1803, by doctors trying to undermine Jenner's reputation. Nonetheless, Jenner deserves credit for catapulting vaccination into the medical mainstream with his *Inquiry into the Causes and Effects of the Variolae Vaccinae, or Cow-Pox*, published in 1798.

In 1966, 160 years after the prophecy that vaccination would exterminate the disease, the World Health Organization launched its Smallpox Eradication Programme. This heroic 11-year drive was masterminded by two American public health doctors, DA Henderson and Bill Foege. Their adversaries included both geopolitical barriers, and colleagues at the WHO who wanted the smallpox budget. One WHO apparatchik even promised to eat a tyre if smallpox was eradicated; Henderson duly promised to send him the tyre and wished him bon appétit. But Henderson and Foege's hard work paid off – three years after the last smallpox case was notified (to make sure no outbreaks had been missed) Target Zero Day was declared.

> **"The heroic 11-year drive to destroy the disease was a triumph of preventative medicine"**

Dr DA Henderson examines children's smallpox vaccination scars in Ethiopia



So 40 years on, why should we remember Target Zero Day? First, to celebrate a triumph of preventative medicine and freedom from a brutal disease. We must also remember the victims of smallpox. In 1914, a Canadian professor warned against forgetting smallpox, which was fast disappearing from North America. It went on to kill at least another 250 million people – three times more than both world wars combined.

Target Zero Day also reminds us of unconquered infections, including polio, measles, malaria, and of course the coronavirus Covid-19. As I write, the WHO has upgraded Covid-19 to a pandemic, the NHS is on a war footing and stock markets are wobbling. So far, though, the virus's impact is modest compared with smallpox. So let's recognise Target Zero Day for what it is: a milestone in world history and a monument to the art of the possible. H

Gareth Williams is emeritus professor and former dean of medicine at the University of Bristol, and the author of *Angel of Death: The Story of Smallpox* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)

HIDDEN HISTORIES

DAVID OLUSOGA explores lesser-known stories from our past

"Before oil, another resource made and broke fortunes: guano"

There are a handful of natural resources that have profoundly shaped the world. The 20th century is often thought of as the Petroleum Age. Oil and access to it served as the foundation for whole economies, sparked wars and led to the drawing of political boundaries. Yet around the time that the Petroleum Age was beginning, and the first oil wells were being sunk, another natural resource was entering its heyday.

Now all but forgotten, this resource transformed the economies of several South American nations and revolutionised agricultural output in countries as far apart as Britain and New Zealand. Tens of thousands of men from both sides of the Pacific Ocean toiled to extract it, often working themselves to death for a pittance, while a few men in Europe and the United States became extraordinarily wealthy through the trade in this vital commodity. This precious material led to the kidnapping of forced labourers, enticed the US to annex remote islands and devastated the population of Easter Island. All this was for guano: the poo of seabirds.

The epicentre of the Guano Era was a series of uninhabited islands off the coast of Peru. There, seabirds such as the Guanay cormorant nested in huge colonies on cliffs and rocky outcrops. They fed on the fish that teemed in the rich ocean currents running up the west coast of South America, and having digested their food, they excreted guano, which is exceptionally rich in nitrogen. Over millennia, the guano of generations of these birds had piled up in layers, tens of metres deep.

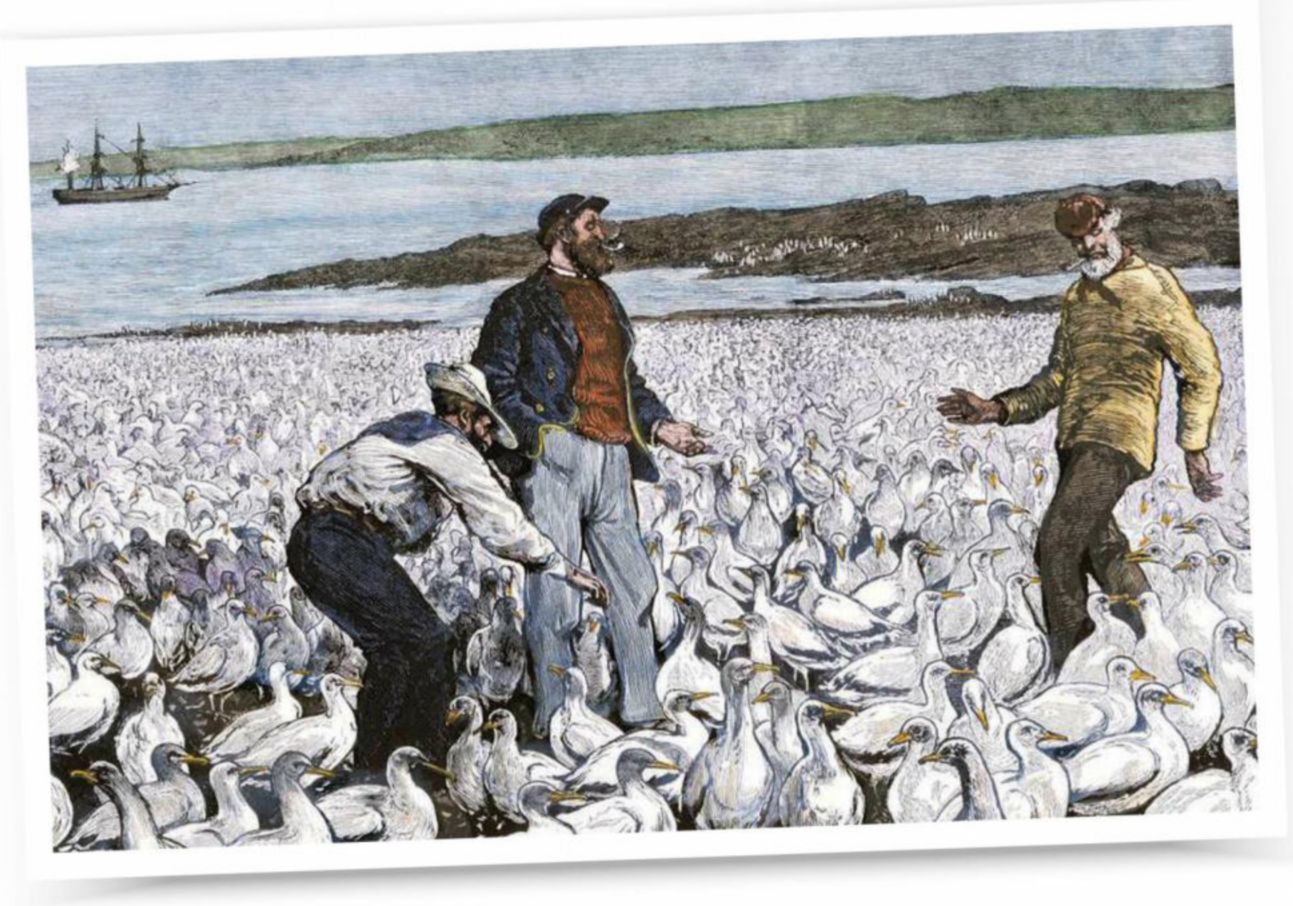
The indigenous people of Peru had been using guano to fertilise crops for more than a thousand years. The Spanish colonisers had also noted the benefits of guano but it was not until the early 19th century, when the explorer Alexander von Humboldt encountered guano and brought samples back to Paris for scientific analysis, that its full potential was recognised.

At the centre of the history of guano was the British merchant William Gibbs. In 1822, his family's trading firm, Antony Gibbs & Sons, opened an office in Lima, the capital of recently independent Peru. This meant that in the early 1840s, when the Peruvian government nationalised guano mining, Gibbs was perfectly placed to secure a contract to export the guano internationally. The first consignments, of 182 tonnes, arrived in Britain in 1842. The next year, William Gibbs promoted his product by publishing a pamphlet called *Guano: Its Analysis and Effects Illustrated by the Latest Experiments*. Over 36 pages, he extolled the virtues of guano as a fertiliser. Farmers were especially keen to try it in 1844, as the potato blight took hold. In 1847, Peru granted Gibbs a monopoly over exports of guano to Europe and the US, earning his firm profits of more than £80,000–£100,000 a year (roughly £8–10m in today's terms).

Gibbs was one of the winners of the Guano Era. The losers were the impoverished labourers who dug the guano with spades and shovelled it into sacks on the Chincha Islands. Not only was this back-breaking work, some of the labourers were in fact slaves: men who had been kidnapped from places like Easter Island in a practice known as 'blackbirding'. Others were convicts, or indentured labourers from China who had been told they were going to California to dig for gold. Those Easter Islanders who survived this ordeal unwittingly carried smallpox back to their homes, decimating their community. When even this brutal industry was unable to keep up with demand, the US scrambled to find its own source of guano – and began annexing seabird islands in the Pacific and Caribbean under its 1856 Guano Islands Act. H

David Olusoga is professor of public history at the University of Manchester, and the presenter of several BBC documentaries

BBC



Rich pickings

Sailors visit a guano bed off the coast of Peru in the 1880s. The nitrogen-rich droppings of fish-eating seabirds proved an extraordinarily useful – and lucrative – agricultural resource

AKG-IMAGES

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LETTERS

Reader Roger Fay questions whether Mary Tudor, who instigated religious persecution, can ever be seen as "saintly"

High
OLD BRISTOL HOUSE
E. E. REES
BOOTS
E. E. REES

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Contested portrait

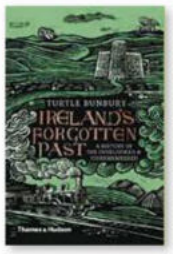
Many thanks for another issue of *BBC History Magazine*. Always a great read!

I appreciated the article on Queen Mary (*Mary: Brutal but Brilliant*, April) in that Alexander Samson set out all that could be said in favour of Mary: a helpful yardstick against which to measure other views. But in my opinion, he unearthed little. He concludes: "Surely we should recognise that Mary wasn't just 'bloody', but also saintly and wise." Yet what kind of a 'saint' has such blood on their hands as Mary?

Alexander argues Mary had high ability, a happy marriage and a sense of humour. I can think of several 20th-century dictators possessing these three characteristics, especially the first, but all were paranoid or insanely bigoted. Granted, Elizabeth I didn't shine in her treatment of Catholics, but there was a sort of *casus belli*, in that, in 1570, the pope excommunicated Elizabeth, thereby setting her Catholic subjects against her. In contrast, the martyrdom of several hundreds of Protestants at Mary's instigation was religious persecution of the worst kind.

It was a historical accident, not a stroke of genius from Mary, that she preceded Elizabeth to the throne. If Mary had any 'genius', it was in the rapid alienation of her subjects – witness Wyatt's rebellion. Where Mary did bequeath Elizabeth a legacy was in the negative lesson on how not to alienate a nation. To me, the one fascinating fact the article unearthed was that Mary died during an influenza epidemic. Now that does give us something to ponder!

Roger Fay, Ripon



We reward the *Letter of the Month* writer with a copy of a new history book. This issue, that is **Ireland's Forgotten Past** by Turtle Bunbury. You can read our review of the book on page 59

Misleading impression?

If the interview with Simon Jenkins in your March issue (*A Welsh Tragedy?*) is anything to go by, I suspect his recent Radio 4 documentary – controversially entitled *Wales: A Twentieth-Century Tragedy?* – was largely based on flimsy anecdotal evidence.

For example, when Mr Jenkins' father left Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil around 1932, he may have observed that the streets were infinitely nicer to live in than those in northern England, but at the time the unemployment rate in Dowlais was 80 per cent. Many of the houses there were demolished within 40 years of his leaving. On visiting Dowlais in 1936, the Prince of Wales famously said, "Something must be done." This does not suggest the "classy place" described by Mr Jenkins.

Mr Jenkins states that wealth stayed in Wales, but the unemployed of Dowlais did not have any wealth to tide them over. This is why 27,000 people left Merthyr Tydfil before the Second World War.

One of the themes of the interview is that the Welsh spend a lot of time asking for grants. What they have sought is investment, in the same way that northern England currently looks towards Westminster.

Mr Jenkins has suggested the Welsh language will flourish if it is banned. But Welsh speaking was discouraged in schools in the 19th century – most famously through the use of the 'Welsh Not' – and it predictably had the opposite effect.

For a more balanced view one can turn to the work of many eminent Welsh historians, two of them Dowlais men – Professors Gwyn Williams and Glanmor Williams.

John Strand, Merthyr Tydfil

English disinterest

The interview with Simon Jenkins on Wales was fascinating. As an Englishman from the provinces – that is, Newcastle upon Tyne – I found his views and perspectives very relevant in this day and age.

I believe he is correct in saying that the English are not the slightest bit interested in Wales. I am a history buff and have read about Edward I and Owain Glyndwr, but that's about as far as my knowledge goes.

I can also agree with his suggestion that Wales needs to kick-start its economy. In my opinion, Wales needs to take a leaf out of the Northumberland Tourist Board's book and do more to promote Welsh history, culture and countryside, and thus entice English tourists to visit.

Philip Houghton, Newcastle upon Tyne

The lives of artists

In her enjoyable and informative article about Artemisia Gentileschi (*The Pain that Powered Artemisia,* April) Catherine Fletcher concludes by saying that we should not pay so much attention to her personal life and that we rarely scrutinise the lives of her male contemporaries in the same way.

Firstly, it must surely be extremely relevant to understand that Artemisia's painting of the attack on Holofernes by Judith may be an outpouring of her own feelings after her rape in real life.

Secondly, it is quite untrue that male contemporaries have not been put under the microscope in the same way. We have made much of Leonardo's illegitimacy and homosexuality, the accusations of sodomy against Botticelli, the many romantic affairs that probably hastened the death of Raphael, the children fathered by Titian with his housekeeper, and the vast cache of sonnets written by Michelangelo to Tommaso, a man almost three times younger than he was.

Ian MacDonald, Essex

Never again

Reading *When the Liberators Came* (February) I was transported back to my visit to

Shaving brushes taken from prisoners at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp

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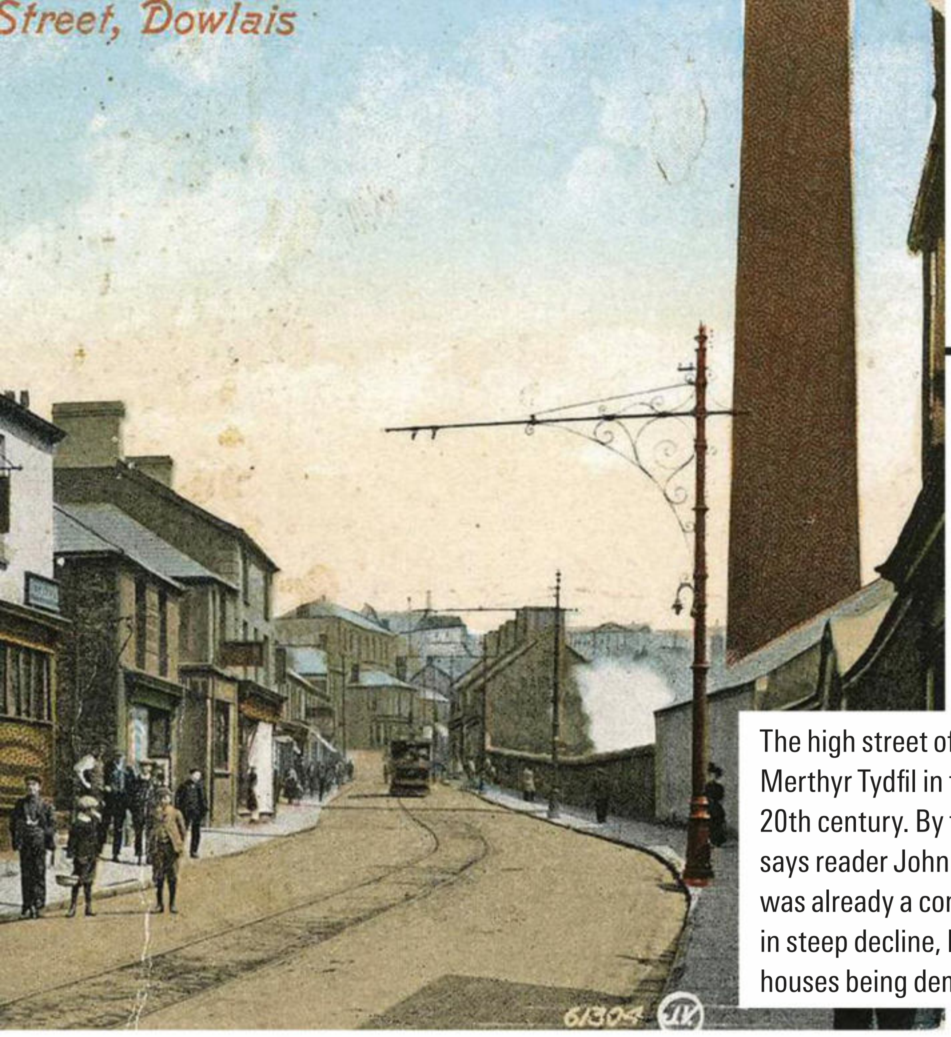

The high street of Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil in the early 20th century. By the 1930s, says reader John Strand, it was already a community in steep decline, leading to houses being demolished

Auschwitz-Birkenau last year with a group of A-Level students. Through studying history over many years, I have seen photos, watched documentaries and read books of first-hand accounts of experiences in the camp. But nothing prepares you for a visit. The victims' shoes, hair, glasses and named suitcases on display bring to life as individuals the 1.1 million people who died in this camp alone.

Birkenau, where the gas chambers were situated, stretches for as far as the eye can see. The train line and watchtower buildings so familiar, but now bringing to life the fear the people arriving at the camp must have felt.

Later in the trip we met Bernard Offen, a Holocaust survivor. His story of enduring the Kraków Ghetto and several camps was distressing, particularly when it is multiplied by millions of people who did not survive to tell their stories. But for me it was when Bernard rolled his sleeve back to reveal his tattoo number from Auschwitz, B-7815, that I could hold back the tears no more.

We must remember the Holocaust, learn the lessons and ensure it is never repeated. The scale of the tragedy sometimes means we forget how it started on the streets in the form of anti-Semitism. We must not be blind to the persecution, racism and violence that is being enacted across the world today, including in our own country.

Pauline Vickers, Wrexham

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Our medieval ancestors used incantation
ward off illness, uttered prayers to summ
guardian angels, and cast sinister spell
on their enemies. And, writes
Catherine Rider, there was little a
disappointing clergy could do to stop the

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APOCA NO?

Stephen and Matilda's battle for the English crown in the mid-12th century has long been cast as one of the most turbulent episodes in British history. But, asks **Matthew Lewis**, does the 'Anarchy' deserve its bloody reputation, or have we been duped by Plantagenet spin?

"Wheresoever men tilled, the earth bare no corn, for the land was all ruined by such deeds; and they said openly that Christ and his saints were asleep. Such and more than we can say we endured 19 winters for our sins." The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle paints a bleak picture of King Stephen's reign from 1135–54, during which magnates "oppressed greatly the wretched men of the land with the making of castles; when the castles were made, they filled them with devils and evil men".

The anonymous author of the *Gesta Stephani* (*The Deeds of Stephen*) offers an equally cataclysmic portrait. "England, formerly the seat of justice, the habitation of peace, the height of piety, the mirror of religion, became thereafter a home of perversity, a haunt of strife, a training-ground of disorder, and a teacher of every kind of rebellion."

The terrible events to which the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and *Gesta Stephani* refer afflicted England in the middle of the 12th century. Yet, in truth, the seeds of the disorder were sown decades earlier. Henry I, youngest son of William the Conqueror, had snatched the throne of England on the death of his brother William II in 1100, despite the

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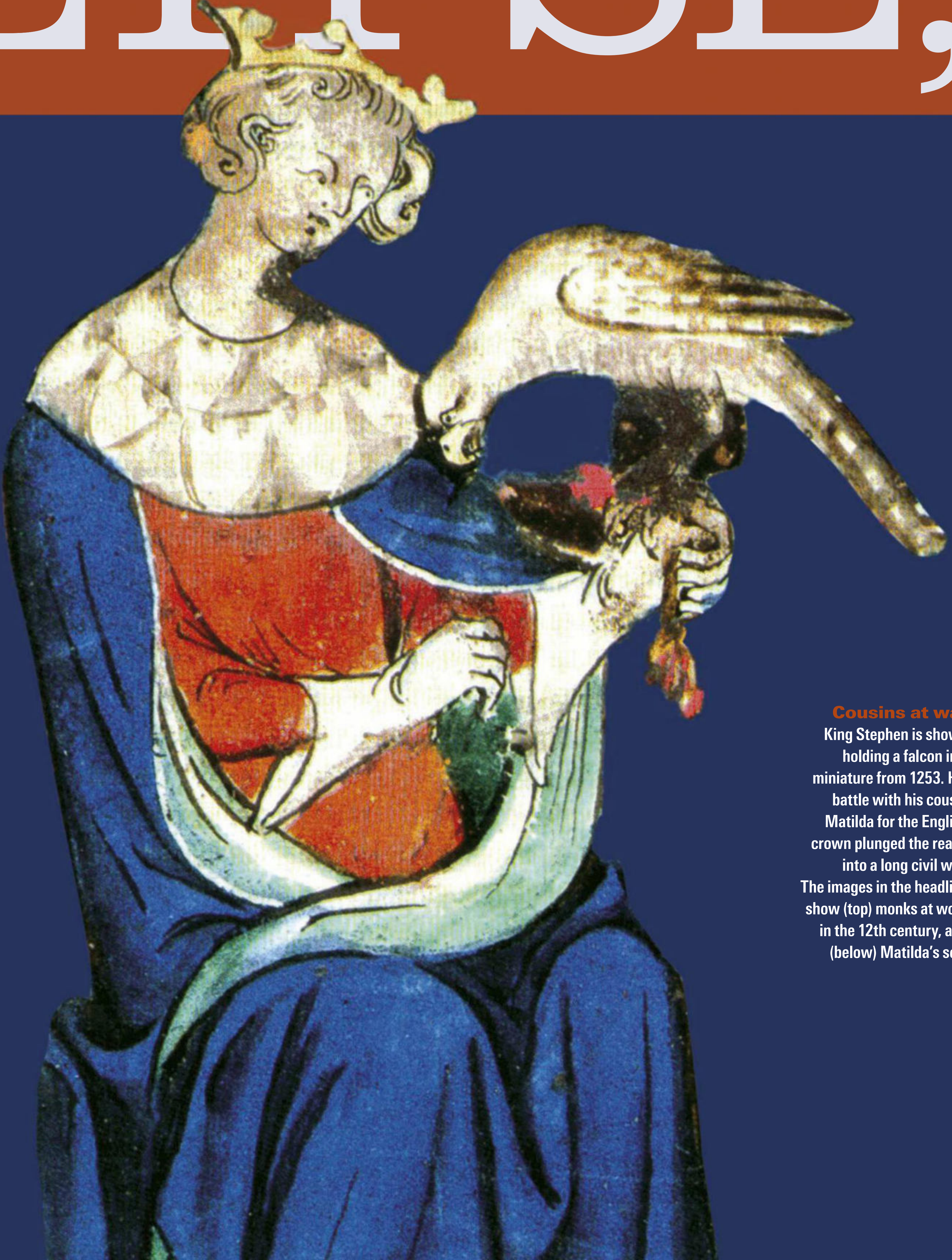


Cousins at war
King Stephen is shown holding a falcon in a miniature from 1253. His battle with his cousin Matilda for the English crown plunged the realm into a long civil war. The images in the headline show (top) monks at work in the 12th century, and (below) Matilda's seal

ALAMY

claim of their oldest brother, Robert, Duke of Normandy. William was killed by an arrow while hunting in the New Forest on 2 August. Three days later, Henry was crowned at Westminster Abbey. Robert was captured at the battle of Tinchebray in Normandy on 28 September 1106 and spent his remaining 27 years as his little brother's prisoner.

Despite fathering a record number of illegitimate children for an English or British monarch – at least 23 – Henry had only two legitimate offspring. Matilda was born in 1102 and William Adelin in 1103. Catastrophe hit in 1120, when William was drowned crossing the Channel in the White Ship disaster. Aside from the personal tragedy, Henry was hit by a political crisis. He remarried, but had no more legitimate children, leaving Matilda as the only heir to his throne. Aware of the perils of trying to impose female rule on a misogynistic nobility, Henry extracted oaths to Matilda, styling her empress by virtue of her marriage to Henry V, Holy Roman Emperor.

In 1125, Henry V died. Three years later, the now 26-year-old widow Matilda was married again. Her new husband was Geoffrey, son of the Count of Anjou, who was just 15 and merely a count's son, something she resented as beneath her imperial status. Matilda and Geoffrey were soon in open opposition to her father on the borders of Normandy. The rebellion helped to cloud the issue of the succession. Henry, of all men, was aware of the potential dangers. History was about to repeat itself.

The shattering of peace

After occupying the English throne for more than three decades, Henry I died in Normandy on 1 December 1135. However, the coronation that took place on 22 December was not that of his daughter, but of his favourite nephew, Stephen of Blois, Count of Boulogne. Stephen claimed his uncle had appointed him heir on his deathbed – and the shattering of peace in England helped his cause. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle complained that in the aftermath of Henry's death, there "was treason in these lands; for every man that might robbed another". There could be no king's peace without a king, and Stephen offered to fill the void into which violence was already spilling.

With King David I of Scotland leading an army over the border into northern England – capturing Carlisle, Wark, Alnwick, Norham and Newcastle before laying siege to Durham – the people of London were all too happy to welcome Stephen. In doing so, they formed an enduring compact with the new king. According to the *Gesta Stephani*, "the elders and those most shrewd in counsel summoned an assembly, and taking prudent forethought for the state of the kingdom, on their own initiative, they agreed unanimously to choose a king". This represented a revival of the Anglo-Saxon principle of election which had been lost at the Conquest.

> **There could be no king's peace without a king, and Stephen offered to fill the void into which violence was already spilling**

It began well. Stephen forced David to withdraw. His speed and agility would become trademarks of his rule. Empress Matilda, pregnant with her third child, lingered at the Norman border and appeared to have allowed her moment to pass. But if Stephen believed he was secure, the illusion was short-lived. On 30 September 1139, Empress Matilda and her half-brother, Henry I's illegitimate son Robert, Earl of Gloucester, landed at Arundel Castle. The *Gesta Stephani* tremulously admitted "England at once was shaken and quivered with intense fear," as "those who obeyed the king were brought low as though cowering beneath a dreadful thunderclap."

The empress's problem was made immediately clear; it was not her arrival that had caused such dread – in the eyes of contemporaries, she was a mere woman – but that of her half-brother. Robert, however, steadfastly refused to supplant his half-sister and darted west to his impregnable fortress at Bristol. When Stephen arrived at Arundel, he found only Matilda, an unreasonable target (due to her sex), so sent her west to her half-brother.

England was divided into three as Matilda and Robert entrenched themselves in the South West and King David snatched territory in the north that Stephen was too distracted to retake. Explosive action came in 1141. On 2 February, Stephen met Robert at the battle of Lincoln, during which Stephen was captured, despite one chronicler's description of him fighting "like a lion, grinding his teeth and foaming at the mouth like a boar".

The empress was elected 'Lady of the English', but the deeply ingrained resistance to female rule saw her driven from London on the eve of her coronation as queen, her assailants enjoying the feast she had been forced to abandon. On 14 September, Matilda's forces were chased from Winchester and her half-brother Robert was captured covering her retreat. Stephen was exchanged for Robert, and the chess board was reset. Stephen, if anything, had his reputation enhanced by emerging from captivity still resiliently wearing the crown.

Only in 1153 did the conflict reach a resolution, when Stephen adopted Empress Matilda's oldest son and appointed him heir. Stephen died the following year on 25 October 1154, and Henry I's grandson succeeded him as Henry II, the first Plantagenet.

A retrograde blip

For centuries, Stephen's reign has been dubbed the Anarchy. Victorian historians deplored the king's decentralisation of power through the appointment of regional earls responsible for local law and order. Henry I had created the Exchequer and Henry II would develop the Common Law. To the imperialist minds of the 19th century, these marked steps on an inexorable march towards the British empire. Stephen was a retrograde blip whose rule was anarchic because it contributed nothing to that grinding progress. They managed to ignore the fact that he, albeit unwittingly, had demonstrated the unshakeable power of the office of king, which withstood 19 years of opposition and a spell in captivity.

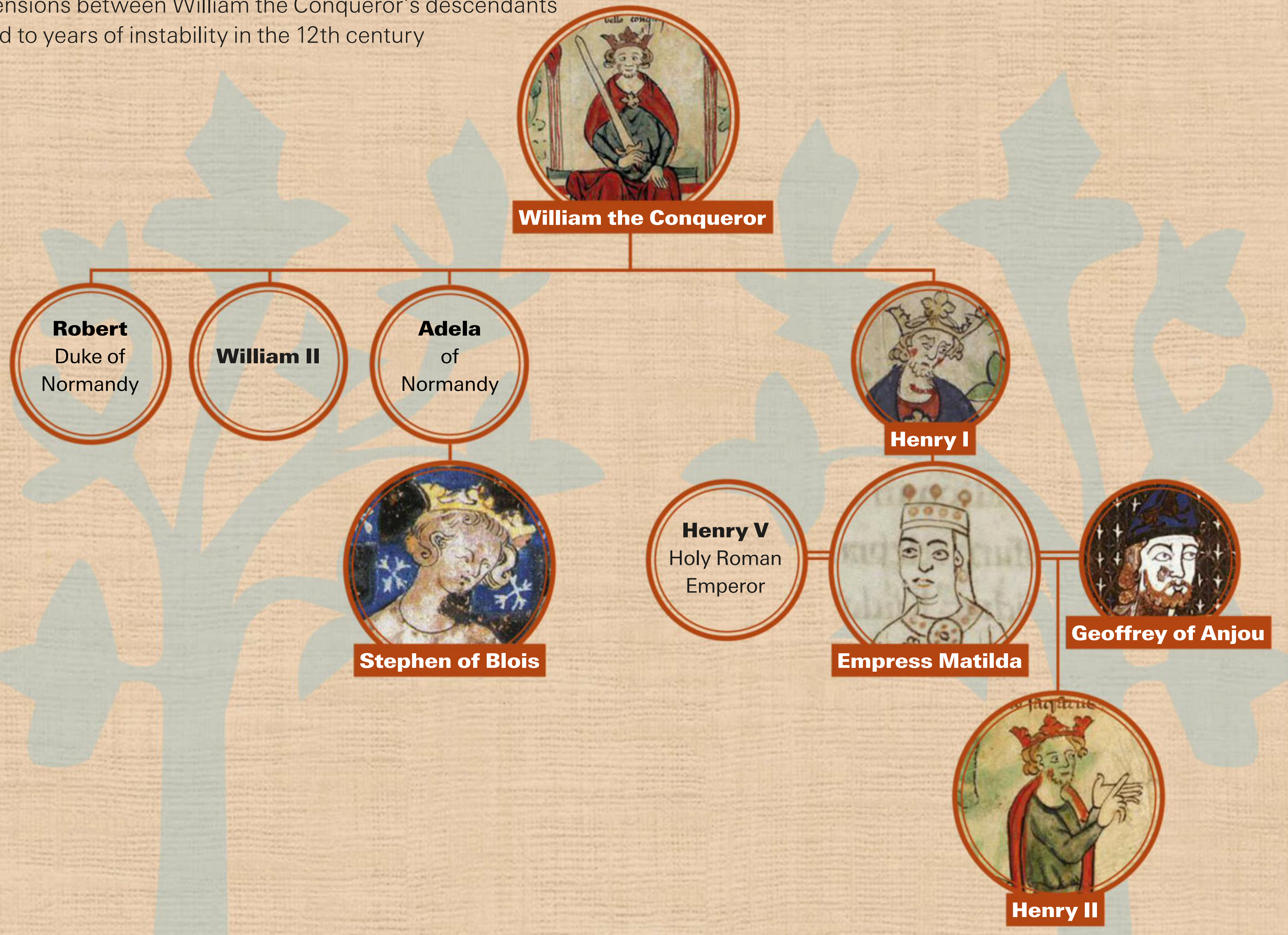
Contemporaries saw much they felt justified the chaotic label, too. Robert Fitz Hubert, a Flemish mercenary in the pay of Robert, Earl of Gloucester, offers a typical example. William of Malmesbury considered him "the cruellest of all men within the recollection of our age, and also a blasphemer against God" who bragged about burning churches and threatened to do the same to William's Malmesbury Abbey. Fitz Hubert's favourite form of torture involved stripping a prisoner, tying them to a post in the midday sun, smearing them in honey and stirring up bees, wasps and anything else that would sting or bite to torment them.

In March 1140, Fitz Hubert captured the strategically important castle at Devizes but refused to hand it over to the empress. Instead, he decided to keep it for himself, summoned men from Flanders and set about establishing himself as a local magnate. He set his sights on Marlborough Castle, where the castellan was John Fitz Gilbert, the Marshal, whose son William Marshal would become one of medieval Europe's most famous knights. John didn't wait for an attack and captured Fitz Hubert. He was ransomed to Earl Robert, who took him to Devizes and

ALAMY/BRIDGEMAN/GETTY/THE PARKER LIBRARY, CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

The Anglo-Norman family tree

Tensions between William the Conqueror's descendants led to years of instability in the 12th century


William the Conqueror
Robert Duke of Normandy
William II
Adela of Normandy
Henry I
Stephen of Blois
Henry V Holy Roman Emperor
Empress Matilda
Geoffrey of Anjou
Henry II

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Rival power base
King Stephen looked to have gained the upper hand in the battle for the English throne. But all that changed in 1139, when Matilda and her half-brother, Robert, landed at Arundel Castle (pictured). Soon, England would be divided into two, then three, rival camps

Monks – shown performing tree surgery in a medieval illumination – were mostly responsible for chronicling the Anarchy, and their instincts were to paint a picture of temporal chaos

hanged him when his garrison refused to surrender. William of Malmesbury saw “God’s judgment exercised upon a sacrilegious man, in that he earned so shameful an end not from the king, to whom he was an enemy, but from those whom he seemed to favour”. William paints a compelling picture of the loss of central authority in England, but there are problems with the sources. They were written by monks, keen to decry the temporal world. Men like Robert Fitz Hubert became moral tales, warning against indulgence in worldly affairs.

The speed with which Henry II restored peace is evidence that royal authority had never really failed

The location of the writers is also problematical. William was at Malmesbury in Wiltshire and the anonymous author of the *Gesta Stephani*, if not the bishop of Bath, was a member of his household. They sat at the frontier of Stephen and Matilda’s dispute and necessarily saw the worst of it, extrapolating their experiences across the whole country. The version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle that has Christ and his saints sleeping was penned at the abbey in Peterborough, where Hugh Bigod, Earl of Norfolk frequently revolted against Stephen for reasons that had little to do with Empress Matilda. Location and world view made the idea of national anarchy seem appealing and reasonable to these writers, but the facts contradict them.

Monasticism saw explosive growth in England during Stephen’s reign, which suggests that it was not as dangerous to travel as monks insisted. The Cistercian order had six houses in England in 1135, and by 1154 had opened 48 more, each stocked with monks who confidently journeyed to fill them. In 1147, a large force of Englishmen embarked, without noble leadership, on a crusade to Portugal. Their ability to organise themselves, and their willingness to leave homes and families, implies there was no fear of rampant lawlessness to prevent their expedition. In 1142, the nine-year-old future Henry II was sent to receive tuition in England, a move that hardly seems rational if there was true anarchy.

Strong ties of loyalty

England became a divided kingdom, but nowhere was royal authority lacking, even if it wore different faces. Stephen retained tight control and strong ties of loyalty in the South East and could stretch his authority as far north as York. In the west, Empress Matilda minted coins and issued writs. Perhaps most successful of all was King David of Scotland, who held much of northern England at this time, keeping it peaceful and well-governed so that the people made no effort to extricate themselves from his authority.

If the monastic chroniclers are to be believed, magnates didn’t just cause the Anarchy, they exacerbated and revelled in it. In reality, they did no such thing. No magnate hoped for lawless chaos on his lands, where profit was made from the order and security that allowed fields to be worked and markets to operate profitably. If royal authority was not felt at times of crisis, magnates immediately filled the void to prevent, not promote, anarchy. William of Newburg noted that “like a king, each had the power to lay down the law for his subjects”, rejecting the vacuum of authority implied by others.

Indeed, magnates tired of the succession crisis far sooner than the protagonists did. In the late 1140s and early 1150s, earls began making peace treaties among themselves called *conventios*. Ranulf, Earl of Chester and Robert, Earl of Leicester sealed a document *finalis pax et Concordia* – of final peace and settlement. They acknowledged that their respective liege lords were at war but stated they had no desire for conflict between themselves. If forced to take the field against each other, they swore to take no more than 20 knights to restrict any fighting and to prevent their masters from launching assaults from their lands. Any men or goods captured during a battle were to be returned without ransom afterwards.

The *conventios* were not seriously tested, but the magnates’ desire to maintain harmony was genuine. Stephen and the future Henry II eventually resigned themselves to peace in part because neither could coax their followers into fighting. Henry of Huntingdon’s insistence that barons “loved, indeed, nothing better than disunion” is at odds with their actions, which defy the monkish belief in the savagery of anyone outside holy orders. Rather than revel in anarchy, many nobles left for the Second Crusade.

The speed with which Henry II restored

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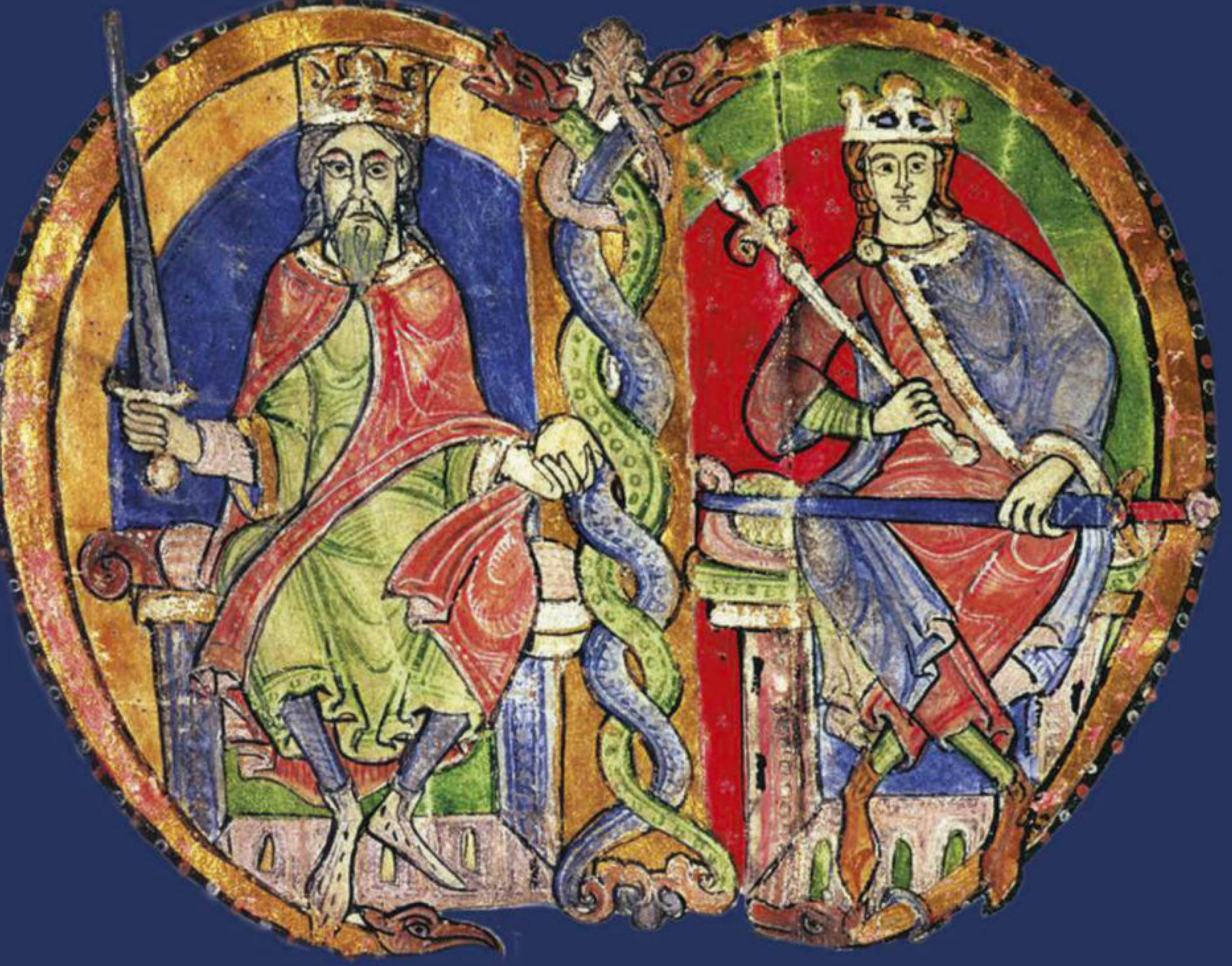

The northern raider

King David I of Scotland (left) and his grandson Malcolm IV shown in a manuscript from 1159. David capitalised on the civil war south of the border by snatching swathes of northern England, and governed his new territory so well that few efforts were made to expel him

ALAMY/BRIDGEMAN

Religious order

The ruins of Fountains Abbey in North Yorkshire, which was established in the 1130s. The mid-12th century saw new monasteries popping up all over England – and the fact that monks were able to journey to fill them suggests that the nation hadn't fallen victim to rampant lawlessness

peace and rebuilt royal finances and authority became a Plantagenet foundation myth, testifying to his unique abilities. In fact, it was evidence that royal authority and the machinery of government had never really failed. Only one year's Exchequer records survive from Henry I's reign – the rest are lost as those of Stephen's reign probably were. Yet the Exchequer is unlikely to have ceased operation; instead it probably contracted to match Stephen's shrunken authority. Meanwhile, Henry II was able to take back the north quickly when he became king because King David left a minor on the throne who could not resist when Henry demanded its return.

Swamped by rivals

If King Stephen would have recognised anarchy, it was only in the sense of so many diverse threats emerging at once: Empress Matilda in England, her husband Geoffrey conquering Normandy, King David in the north and rebel barons. Disciplining nobles becomes impossible when there is a rival claimant to whom they can offer allegiance in a fit of pique. Stephen's capability was swamped by the multitude of competing demands on his resources and attention.

The Anarchy fits the moralising instincts of the monks recording events in the 12th century. It would come to sit nicely within Plantagenet mythology, making Henry II's swift ordering of England seem a miraculous feat of salvation. It is true that royal authority became fragmented, but that is not the same as absence and, however inadvertently, chroniclers credit the magnates with filling in the gaps when and where they occurred.

Anarchy was used by imperialist minds in the 19th century to explain the lack of contribution towards the foundation of empire they saw in Stephen's reign, but anarchy never prevailed. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's assertion that Christ and his saints slept for 19 years does not bear examination. Stephen's reign was not glorious, but that does not make it anarchic. Few wholly unsuccessful rulers lasted 19 years and died in their bed still wearing the crown. The Anarchy is a name to conjure with, but it is time to let go of the idea of chaos throughout King Stephen's reign.

Matthew Lewis is a historian and author. His latest book is *Stephen and Matilda's Civil War: Cousins of Anarchy* (Pen & Sword History, 2019)

LISTEN To listen to Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss the Anarchy on Radio 4's **In Our Time**, go to: *bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01nl963*

Q&A

A selection of historical **conundrums** answered by experts

Of all the British ministerial positions that no longer exist, which were the most important?

››› To start with, how about the postmaster-general? The holder of this position, which originated in the 17th century, was responsible for all postal communications, and later telegraphs. Maintaining modern and efficient communications was an important part of the role, but so was maintaining the government's ability to control (and read!) them.

The British empire saw the creation of numerous cabinet-level offices which don't exist anymore, though the Board of Trade, whose work often related to colonial commerce, still exists as part of the Department of International Trade.

Most now-defunct ministries were 20th-century creations, many formed to tackle the demands of the two world wars. The Ministry of Supply (1939–59) was sort of responsible for providing kit for the armed forces: 'sort of', thanks to intractable Whitehall and inter-service rivalries. The MoS was also responsible for military research and development and, later, Britain's nuclear weapons programme. The Air Ministry (1918–64) was very influential, using government money and regulation to direct the course of British military (and civil) aviation through a crucial period. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Information produced publicity and propaganda for both domestic ("keep calm and carry on") and overseas consumption.

Some readers may also remember the career of Denis Howell, appointed minister for drought in the arid summer of 1976. Howell had considerable powers to restrict water use, and exhorted people to use less, telling reporters he did his bit by taking baths with his wife Brenda. But within days of his appointment, the heavens opened. 'Deluge Denis' was then made minister for floods. Alas, there never were formal ministries for drought or floods; Howell's official cabinet position was actually minister for sport and recreation.

Eugene Byrne, author and journalist specialising in history

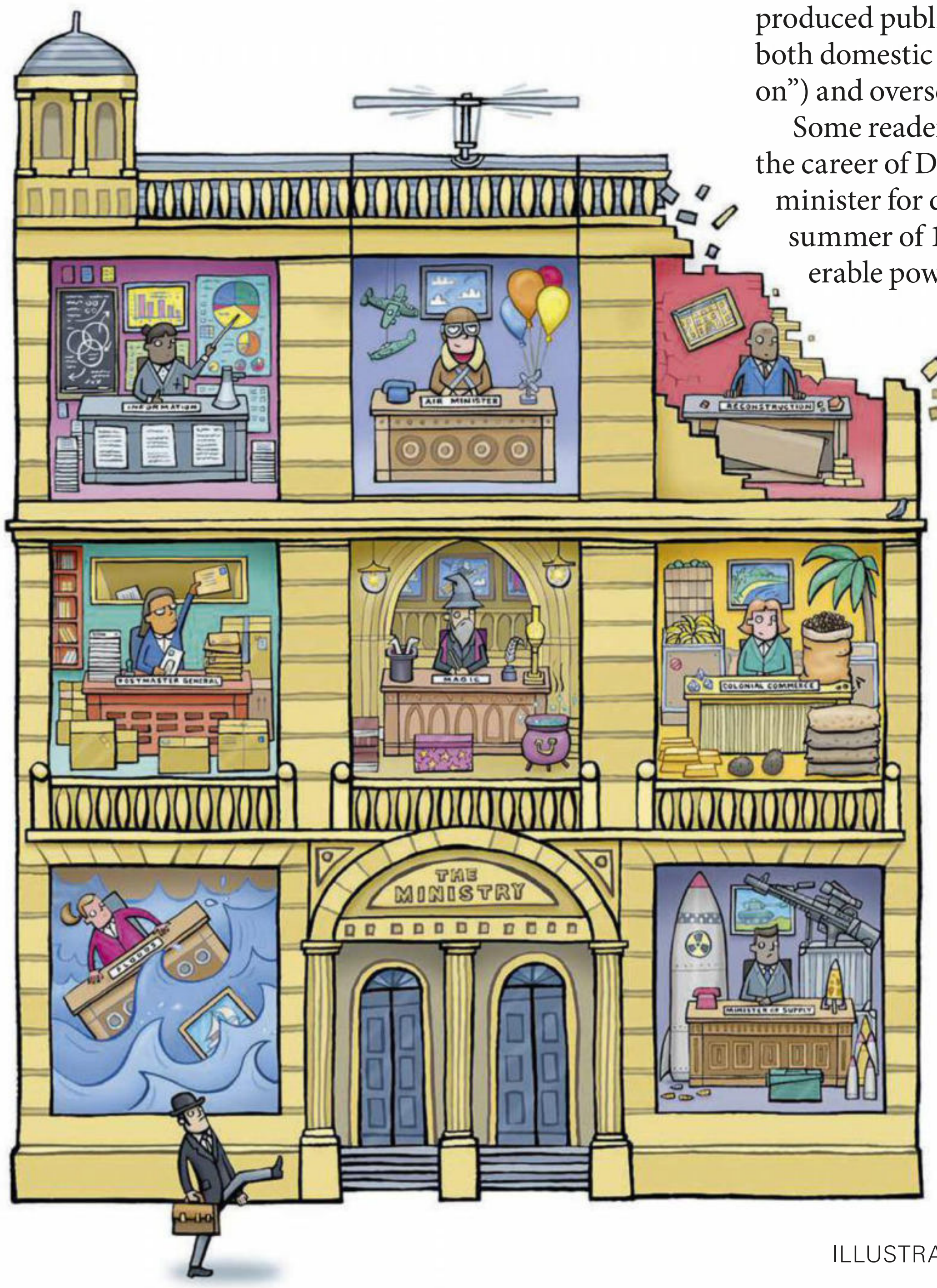

ILLUSTRATION BY **GLEN MCBETH**

Clement Attlee (centre) celebrates his electoral victory over Winston Churchill in July 1945 – a result that surprised many

What was Britain's most unexpected general election result?

››› The answer to this question is more complex than it may first appear. Unexpected for whom? For the party or prime minister that called the election? For the general public? Or opinion polls predicting the result?

Before the rise of the party system in the early 19th century, elections were generally fought on a seat by seat basis. However, national votes still counted. A notable general election occurred in 1784 when William Pitt the Younger won a dramatic victory over Charles James Fox, turning his minority government into one with a majority of more than 120 seats.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, politics was dominated by parties rather than people. Unexpected results include the 1841 victory of Robert Peel's Tories over the Whigs, who had dominated for a decade; and the 1906 Liberal landslide, which also saw the Labour party making an impact, winning 29 seats.

But my favoured candidate for the most unexpected result is Clement Attlee's victory over Winston Churchill in 1945. Although opinion polls predicted Attlee's win, establishment politicians and commentators did not. As a popular war leader, Churchill was expected to sweep to victory, as had been the case with David Lloyd George in the 'coupon' election of 1918. In fact, the public preferred Labour's focus on Britain's future and postwar reconstruction. Attlee was returned with a swing of more than 10 per cent – an achievement that has not been replicated since.

Sarah Richardson, professor of history at the University of Warwick

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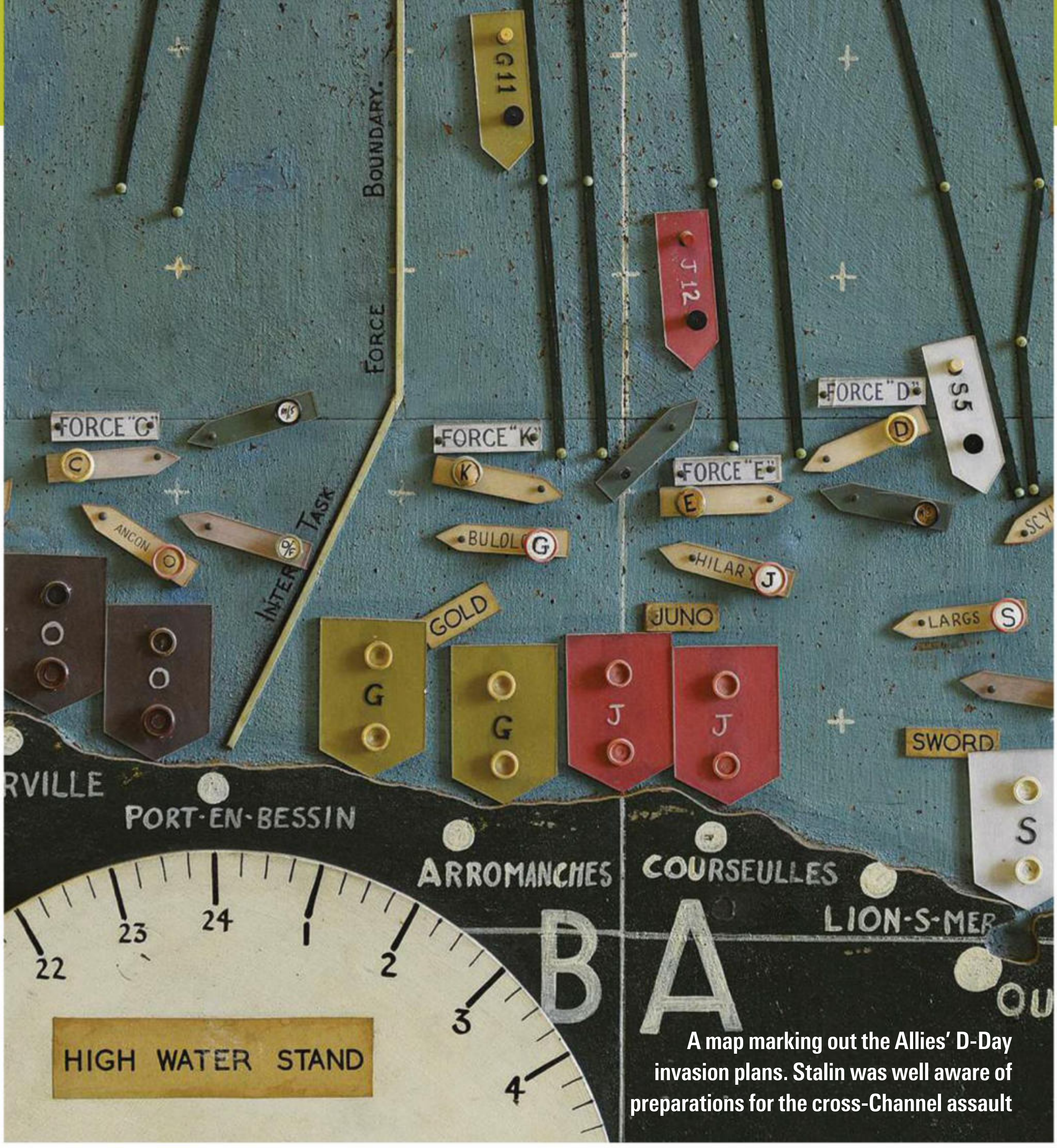

A map marking out the Allies' D-Day invasion plans. Stalin was well aware of preparations for the cross-Channel assault

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How much did the Soviet Union know about D-Day before it happened?

››› Although the timing of D-Day was the most closely guarded secret of the war, Churchill had in fact told Stalin many of the details months beforehand.

The Soviets had been impatient for the opening of a second front in Europe ever since the Germans invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941. But Stalin was suspicious – on account of Churchill's well-known antipathy to communism – that the Allies planned to withhold aid from their Soviet allies. However, Churchill was strategically wise and realised that the USSR needed help, for its collapse would allow the Germans precious time and resources.

Assaulting the Germans from Normandy was ultimately the best way of helping the Soviets. Churchill continuously promised Stalin an invasion but, before he could deliver, he first needed the Americans to join the war on Germany. He also realised that the US army needed combat experience of fighting the Wehrmacht, something the Americans themselves did not immediately grasp. As such, at the Casablanca conference in January 1943, he resisted early plans for a cross-Channel attack.

This delay frustrated the Americans and annoyed Stalin, both assuming that Churchill was running shy of a contested beach landing. But it was impossible for the British leader to resist combined Russo-American pressure at the Tehran conference in November 1943. This resulted in an agreed invasion of France in spring/summer 1944 – known as Operation Overlord. The chosen area of Normandy was confirmed in January, with Churchill boasting to Stalin of the construction of two artificial harbours.

Thus, the Soviets (unlike the French Resistance) were aware of many of the details far in advance. On the day, Soviet and Chinese observers watched the landings from HMS *Warspite*. Two weeks later, Stalin launched Operation Bagration, to directly complement Operation Overlord – proof, if any were needed, that the Allies could operate in concert against the Third Reich.

Peter Caddick-Adams, author of *Sand & Steel: A New History of D-Day* (Arrow)

DID YOU KNOW...?

Leading from the front

When the Boers defeated the British at Spion Kop in January 1900, three future national leaders were present at the battle. Louis Botha, who led the Boers, would go on to become the Union of South Africa's first prime minister in 1910. On the British side, meanwhile, were both Churchill and Gandhi. Churchill, who had come to South Africa as a war correspondent, served as a courier during the fighting. As for Gandhi, he was in command of the Indian ambulance corps that he had personally raised.

Too much horsing around

In 1894, Queen Victoria was anything but amused when she arrived at London's Horse Guards in her carriage to find the guards there drinking and gambling while on duty. As a punishment she ordered that, for the next 100 years, the guards had to parade for inspection by an officer every day at four o'clock. Although the 100 years finished in 1994, Queen Elizabeth wanted the parade to continue and the Household Cavalry still carry on the tradition today.

A thriller in the near east

Queen of crime Agatha Christie (right) was not only one of the world's bestselling writers, she was also an accomplished archaeologist. In the 1930s she accompanied her second husband, archaeologist Max Mallowan, on digs throughout the near east. Christie supervised workmen as well as conserving, photographing and cataloguing finds at a range of sites including the Mesopotamian cities of Nineveh, Ur and Nimrud. Some of Christie's conservation techniques might make modern archaeologists shudder – she cleaned the carved ivories using face cream and a knitting needle.

Julian Humphrys, author and journalist specialising in history

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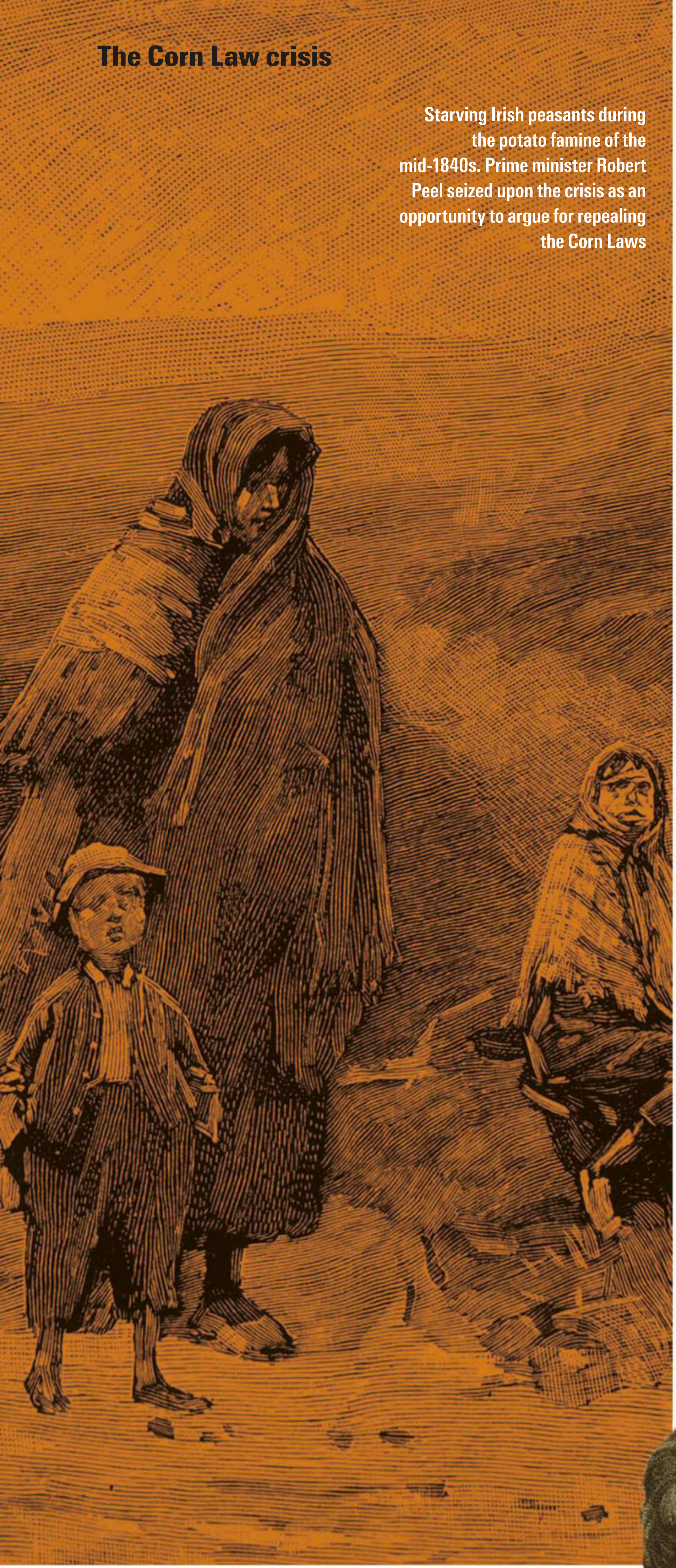
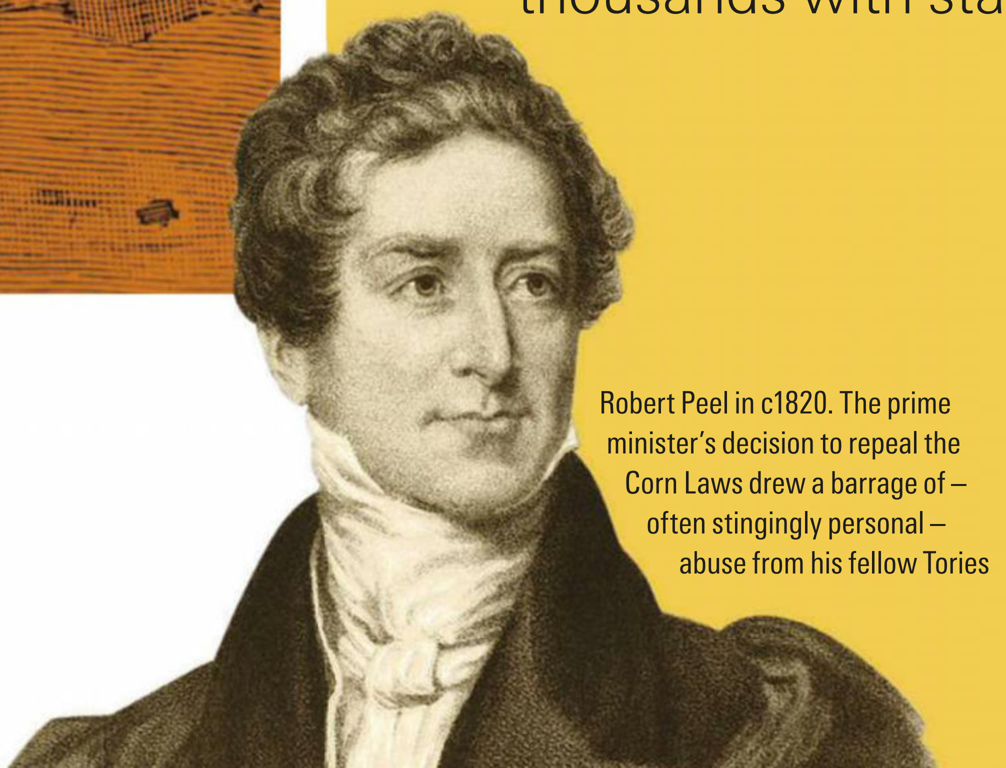


Starving Irish peasants during the potato famine of the mid-1840s. Prime minister Robert Peel seized upon the crisis as an opportunity to argue for repealing the Corn Laws

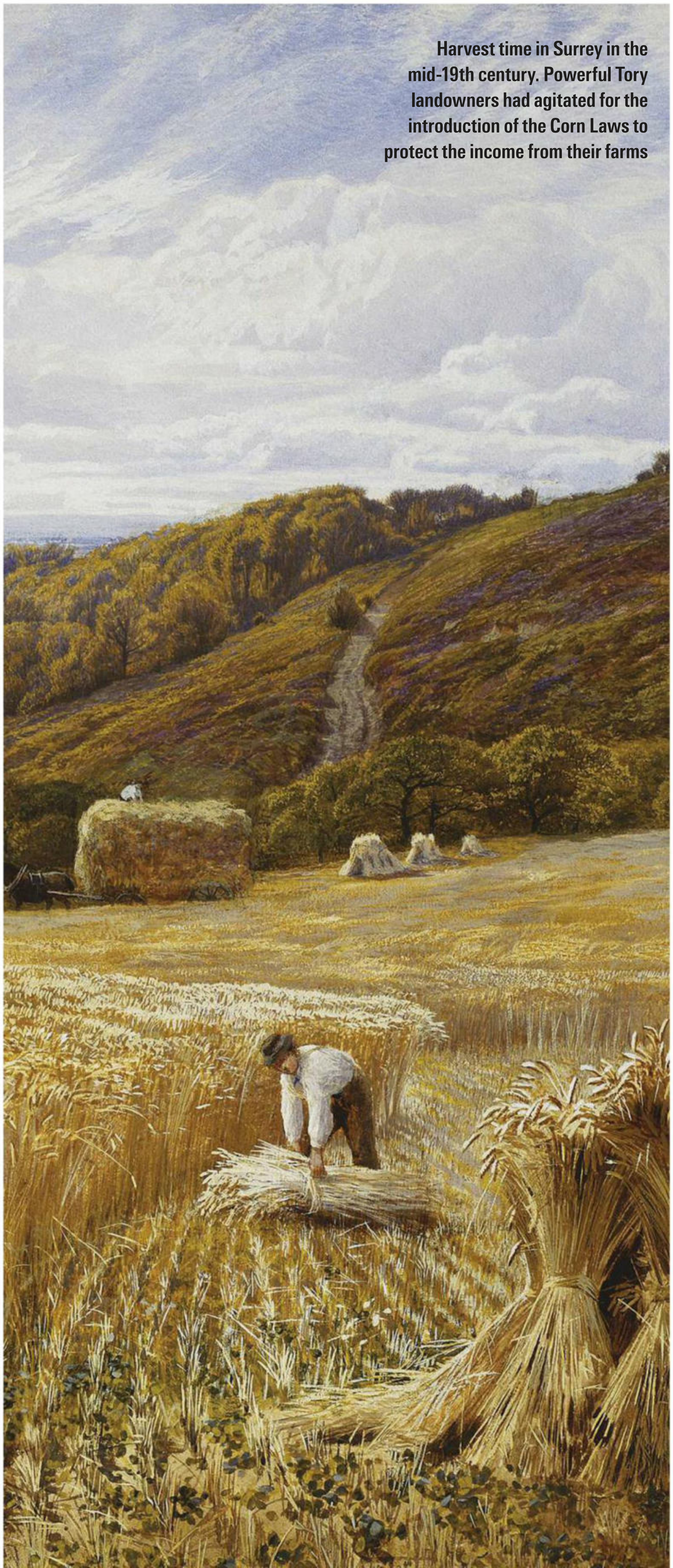
"Good God, how much bloody flux must a people bear before you provide them with food?"

In the 1840s, Britain was pitched into a huge political battle over the price of bread. The Corn Law crisis triggered a bitter civil war in the Tory party – and, writes **Stephen Bates**, threatened thousands with starvation

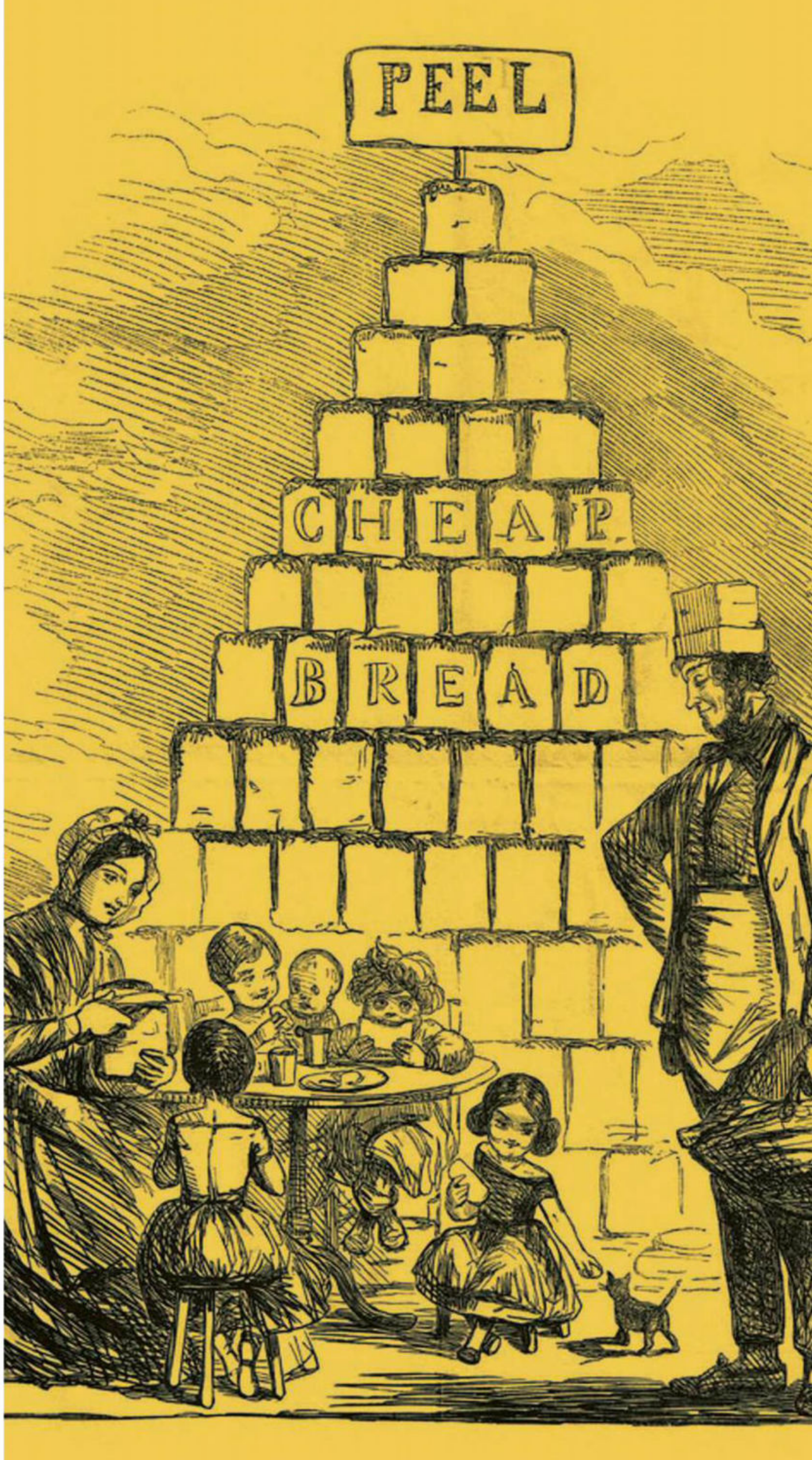


Robert Peel in c1820. The prime minister's decision to repeal the Corn Laws drew a barrage of – often stingingly personal – abuse from his fellow Tories

BRIDGEMAN/GETTY



Harvest time in Surrey in the mid-19th century. Powerful Tory landowners had agitated for the introduction of the Corn Laws to protect the income from their farms



A family has plenty to eat in this 1850 *Punch* cartoon, published after Peel's sudden death, praising the former prime minister's repeal of the Corn Law

BRIDGEMAN

> **The Corn Law crisis sparked a Tory civil war so bitter that it kept the party out of majority power for 30 years**

For 30 years in the first half of the 19th century, Britain was obsessed with the price of bread. Waves of unrest swept the country as bad harvests, food shortages and dire living conditions stalked the poorest in society. Calls for parliamentary reform grew ever more insistent as citizens demanded that politicians be more responsive to their hardships. The first modern pressure groups – among them the Chartists – hounded the government regularly.

At the heart of this political and social turbulence was a growing row over the cost of food – an imbroglio we now know as the Corn Law crisis. On one side of the argument stood those who argued for strict tariffs on the import of foreign cereals into Britain; on the other were those who contended that such restrictions were bad for the economy and bad for those at the bottom of the nation's social ladder.

When the two sides clashed in the 1840s, what followed was a parliamentary battle every bit as divisive as the struggle over Brexit, and a Tory civil war so bitter that it kept the party out of majority power for nearly 30 years. In 1845, the Tory home secretary James Graham wrote: "We have lost the slight hold which we ever possessed over the hearts and feelings of our followers." He was thinking of the Tory backbenchers, but his words could have been echoed 175 years later in our own time.

A slump in prices

There had been import restrictions on cereals for centuries, intended to stabilise prices and prevent commodity speculation. But it wasn't until the end of the Napoleonic Wars that the government introduced restrictions intended to exclude foreign cereals altogether – by passing the 1815 Corn Law. With prices slumping following war with France, farmers and landowners were anxious to protect their harvests, even if it made the most staple food dearer for workers and their families. While there was a case for making British agriculture self-sufficient, and improving yields through more efficient farming, the landowning lobby was by far the most important in parliament and it demanded protection.

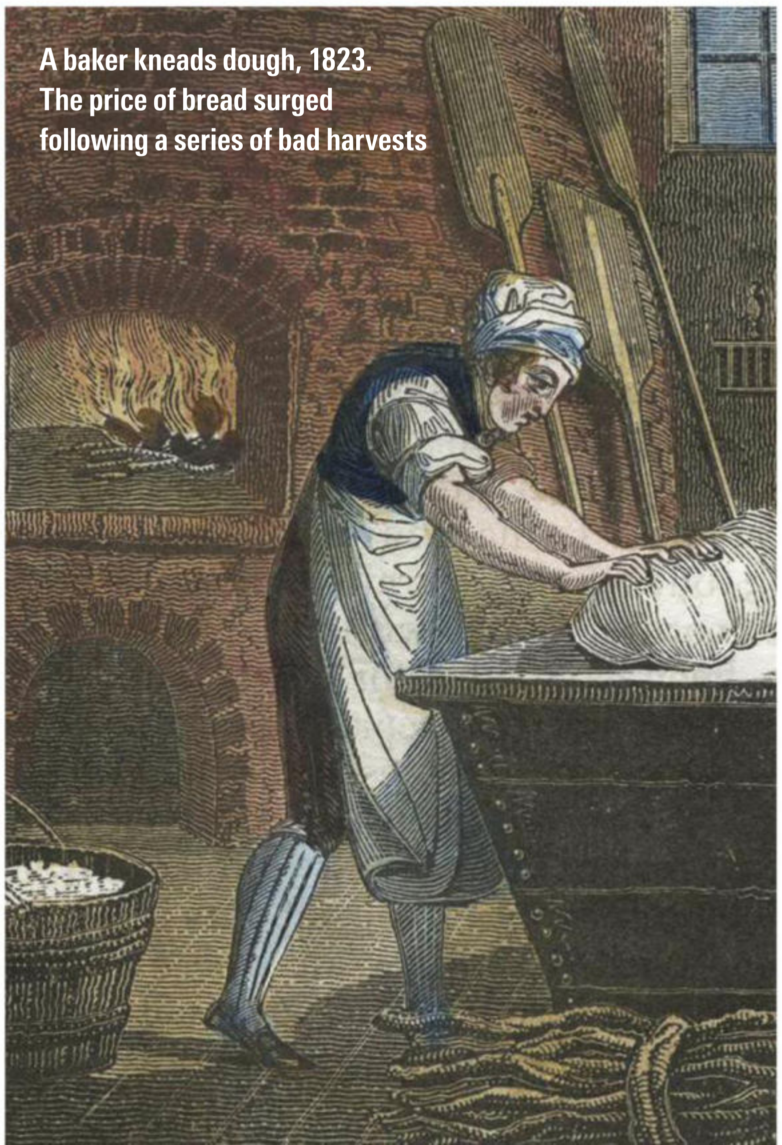
The 1815 Corn Law prohibited grain imports until domestic prices reached 80 shillings a quarter (a quarter being 480lbs or about a fifth of a tonne) – which they never did in the 30 years of its operation. When harvests were poor, as they were for several years in the aftermath of the war, bread prices rose. A four-pound loaf, which could feed a family for a couple of days, surged to more than a shilling in 1817. This came at a time when cotton spinners had seen their earnings halved to about 12 shillings a week and farm labourers earned only seven shillings. The consequences for the poor could be catastrophic. It is hardly surprising that there was a direct correlation between price rises and a surge of political agitation during the four years following the end of the war.

Meanwhile, as the industrial revolution made Britain the most dynamic economy in the world, calls for the removal of tariffs to benefit trade were growing louder. Free trade was becoming the period's dominant economic theory: its proponents argued it would boost economic output, stimulate employment for a growing population and lead to happier workers. Increased international trade would, it was confidently predicted, improve international peace and harmony. Agriculture would have to become more efficient to meet demand, and if food was cheaper, wages could be lowered.

By the time Sir Robert Peel was returned to power as prime minister in 1841 with a sizeable Tory majority over the Whigs, he accepted this argument. The first party leader to come from a manufacturing rather than a landed background, Peel was the dominant figure in his party and in the Commons.

Immensely wealthy from his family's calico printing business, Peel was not only intellectually distinguished but had been in government service on and off as a minister for 30 years. His had been a professional political career, not an exercise in dilettantism. He was stiff and formal – famously described by Daniel O'Connell as having a smile like the silver plate on a coffin lid – and he regarded his backbench colleagues with disdain. They did not understand the economic arguments, not studying them diligently as he did. "How can those who spend their time in hunting and shooting and eating and drinking know what are the motives of those… who have access to the best information and have no other object under Heaven but to… answer the general interests of all classes?" he wrote to his wife, Julia, in 1845. In his view, as in the hunting field, "heads see, but tails follow". This was a metaphor, he reasoned, such backbenchers ought to understand.

In return, many Tories viewed Peel with suspicion. He had ratted once, changing his mind from being a firm opponent of Catholic emancipation – 'Orange Peel' – to accepting



A baker kneads dough, 1823. The price of bread surged following a series of bad harvests

AKG/BRIDGEMAN

its necessity in the late 1820s to avoid potential rebellion in Ireland. This was regarded as a U-turn on a central tenet of Toryism that saw him drummed out as the MP for Oxford University by its High Tory voters. A door at his old college, Christ Church, still has the slogan 'No Peel' hammered into it in nails.

If he could abandon such a fundamental belief, what else might he surrender? Their suspicion was enhanced when Peel proposed a £30,000 government grant to rebuild the Catholic seminary at Maynooth in 1845. He saw it as a way of appeasing Irish Catholics; Tory backbenchers believed it was endorsing heresy. James Graham wrote that Peel and supporters such as himself were "scouted as traitors".

Bonfire of the duties

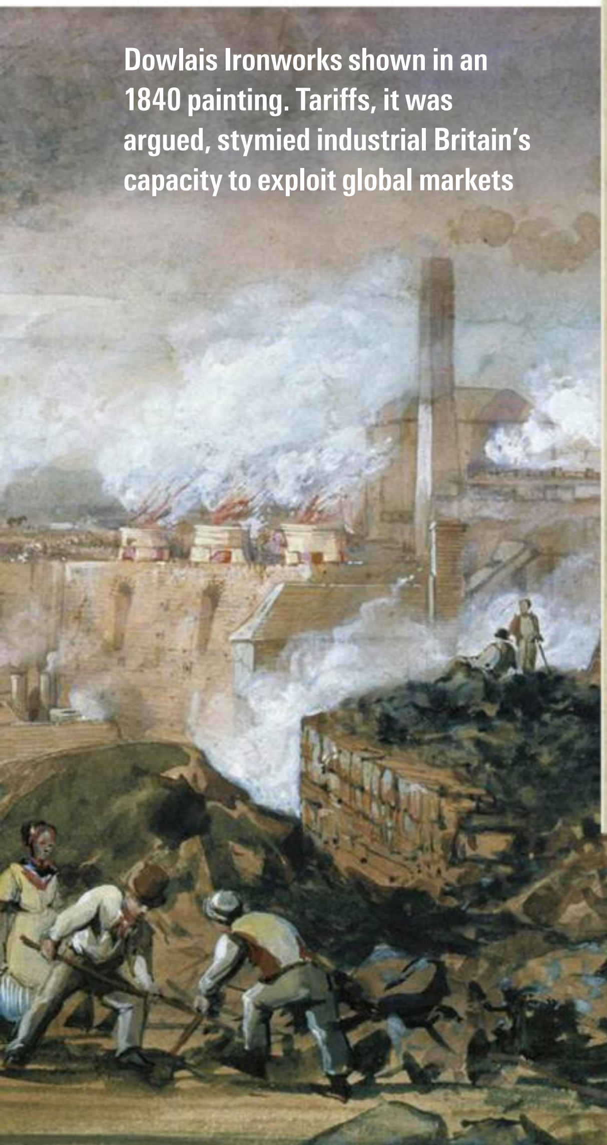
In the first Tory budget in 1842, Peel embarked on a wholesale revision of the complex import tariff system, reducing duties on 750 items out of 1,200, while reintroducing income tax to offset the shortfall. Three years later, he cut tariffs on a further 430 imports, including cotton, glass, timber and sugar. Everyone knew that the outstanding remaining tariff was corn.

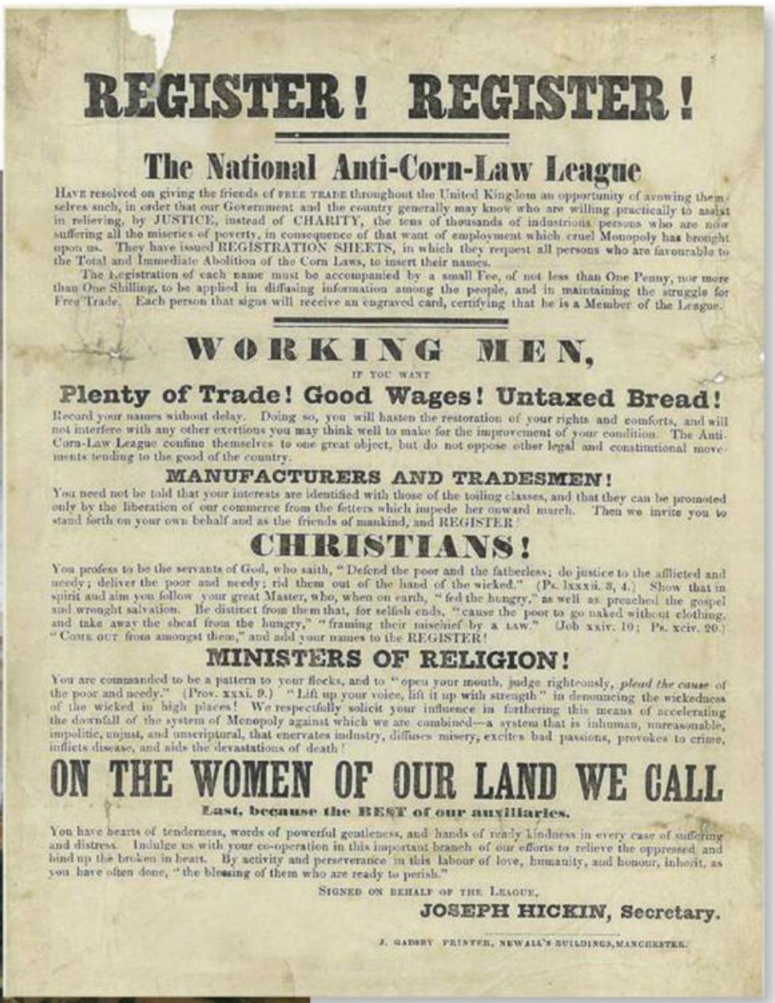
The government was coming under increasing pressure from the working-class Chartist movement, demanding political reforms, but more importantly from the Anti-Corn Law League, founded among northern manufacturers with the single, focussed aim of repeal. The league was well-funded and increasingly sophisticated in its campaigning. It employed professional staff in Manchester, staged well-attended meetings and sent out thousands of letters a day. It also published newspapers and articles – the *Economist* magazine was founded in 1843 to promote the cause – and already had two MPs, Richard Cobden and John Bright, harrying the government. Intellectually convinced, Peel was finding it increasingly difficult to counter their arguments.

In the summer of 1845, a natural disaster gave Peel the excuse to do what he had already privately decided. The potato crop was rotting in a wet summer. This affected the harvest across Britain, but the consequences were especially dire in Ireland, where potatoes were the staple diet. Peel, who had been a minister in Dublin many years earlier, knew how devastating a famine would be. He took urgent, though largely ineffectual, action: the government surreptitiously bought up maize in the United States. Nicknamed 'Peel's brimstone' by the Irish, it rotted crossing the Atlantic, could not be unloaded where the need was greatest, and the recipients were unused to cooking it.

Meanwhile, Peel seized the excuse to argue for repealing the Corn Laws, albeit cautiously and gradually. "Rotten potatoes have done it all," growled the elderly Duke of Wellington, the Tories' leader in the Lords. "They put Peel in his damned fright."

BRIDGEMAN


Dowlais Ironworks shown in an 1840 painting. Tariffs, it was argued, stymied industrial Britain's capacity to exploit global markets


REGISTER! REGISTER!

The National Anti-Corn-Law League

Have resolved on giving the friends of FREE TRADE throughout the United Kingdom an opportunity of avowing themselves such, in order that our Government and the country generally may know who are willing practically to assist in relieving, by JUSTICE, instead of CHARITY, the tens of thousands of industrious persons who are now suffering all the miseries of poverty, in consequence of that want of employment which cruel Monopoly has brought upon us. They have issued REGISTRATION SHEETS, in which they request all persons who are favourable to the Total and Immediate Abolition of the Corn Laws, to insert their names.

The Registration of each name must be accompanied by a small Fee, of not less than One Penny, nor more than One Shilling, to be applied in diffusing information among the people, and in maintaining the struggle for Free Trade. Each person that signs will receive an engraved card, certifying that he is a Member of the League.

WORKING MEN,

IF YOU WANT

Plenty of Trade! Good Wages! Untaxed Bread!

Record your names without delay. Doing so, you will hasten the restoration of your rights and comforts, and will not interfere with any other exertions you may think well to make for the improvement of your condition. The Anti-Corn-Law League confine themselves to one great object, but do not oppose other legal and constitutional movements tending to the good of the country.

MANUFACTURERS AND TRADESMEN!

You need not be told that your interests are identified with those of the toiling classes, and that they can be promoted only by the liberation of our commerce from the fetters which impede her onward march. Then we invite you to stand forth on your own behalf and as the friends of mankind, and REGISTER!

CHRISTIANS!

You profess to be the servants of God, who saith, "Defend the poor and the fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy; deliver the poor and needy; rid them out of the hand of the wicked." (Ps. lxxxii. 3, 4.) Show that in spirit and aim you follow your great Master, who, when on earth, "fed the hungry," as well as preached the gospel and wrought salvation. Be distinct from them that, for selfish ends, "cause the poor to go naked without clothing, and take away the sheaf from the hungry," "framing their mischief by a LAW." (Job xxiv. 10; Ps. xciv. 20.) "COME OUT from amongst them," and add your names to the REGISTER!

MINISTERS OF RELIGION!

You are commanded to be a pattern to your flocks, and to "open your mouth, judge righteously, *plead the cause* of the poor and needy." (Prov. xxxi. 9.) "Lift up your voice, lift it up with strength" in denouncing the wickedness of the wicked in high places! We respectfully solicit your influence in furthering this means of accelerating the downfall of the system of Monopoly against which we are combined—a system that is inhuman, unreasonable, impolitic, unjust, and unscriptural, that enervates industry, diffuses misery, excites bad passions, provokes to crime, inflicts disease, and aids the devastations of death!

ON THE WOMEN OF OUR LAND WE CALL

Last, because the BEST of our auxiliaries.

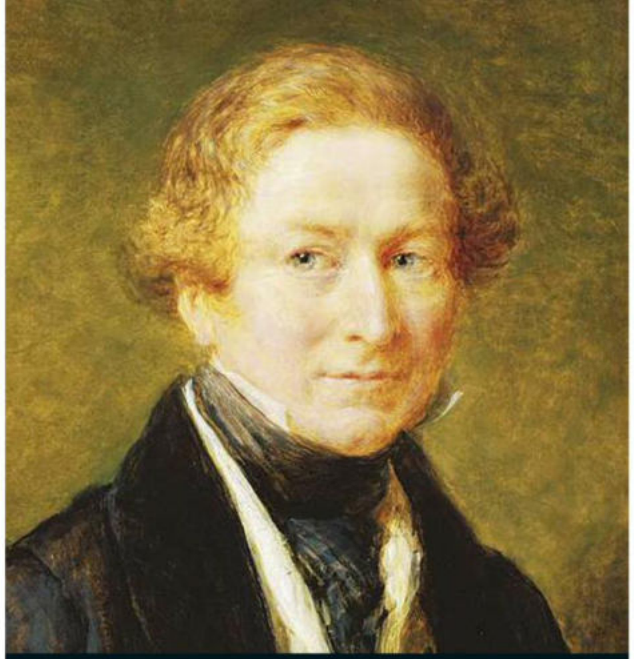
You have hearts of tenderness, words of powerful gentleness, and hands of ready kindness in every case of suffering and distress. Indulge us with your co-operation in this important branch of our efforts to relieve the oppressed and bind up the broken in heart. By activity and perseverance in this labour of love, humanity, and honour, inherit, as you have often done, "the blessing of them who are ready to perish."

SIGNED ON BEHALF OF THE LEAGUE,

JOSEPH HICKIN, Secretary.

J. GADSBY PRINTER, NEWALL'S BUILDINGS, MANCHESTER.

A print published by the vigorous and well-funded National Anti-Corn Law League, c1840s


The brilliant, cold and arrogant Robert Peel – shown in an 1838 painting – served as prime minster twice

"AN ICEBERG WITH A SLIGHT THAW"

The divisive life of Robert Peel

Sir Robert Peel's family made a fortune from calico cloth printing in Lancashire, though Peel (1788–1850) never worked for the company. Profits of £70,000 a year enabled his father – also Sir Robert – to buy a 4,000-acre estate near Tamworth, Staffordshire in the 1790s and to send his son to Harrow and Oxford, where he was the first student at the university ever to be awarded a double first, in mathematics and classics.

Aged 21, Peel became MP for Cashel, an Irish rotten borough. He was regarded as brilliant, but cold and arrogant: "an iceberg with a slight thaw". By 24, he was chief secretary for Ireland, recognised as a rising Tory star. In 1822 he became home secretary, reforming the criminal justice system and introducing a professional police service in London – the Peelers, or Bobbies.

Traditionalists grew suspicious when Peel changed his mind on Catholic emancipation, which he had previously opposed, in 1829 and remembered it 16 years later when he changed his mind on the Corn Laws.

Peel was prime minister twice: in 1834–35 and 1841–46. He helped to reshape the Conservative party, issuing the first party manifesto to the electors of his then constituency of Tamworth. In it, he promised the maintenance of order and good government and a review of civil and ecclesiastical institutions to correct abuses and redress grievances.

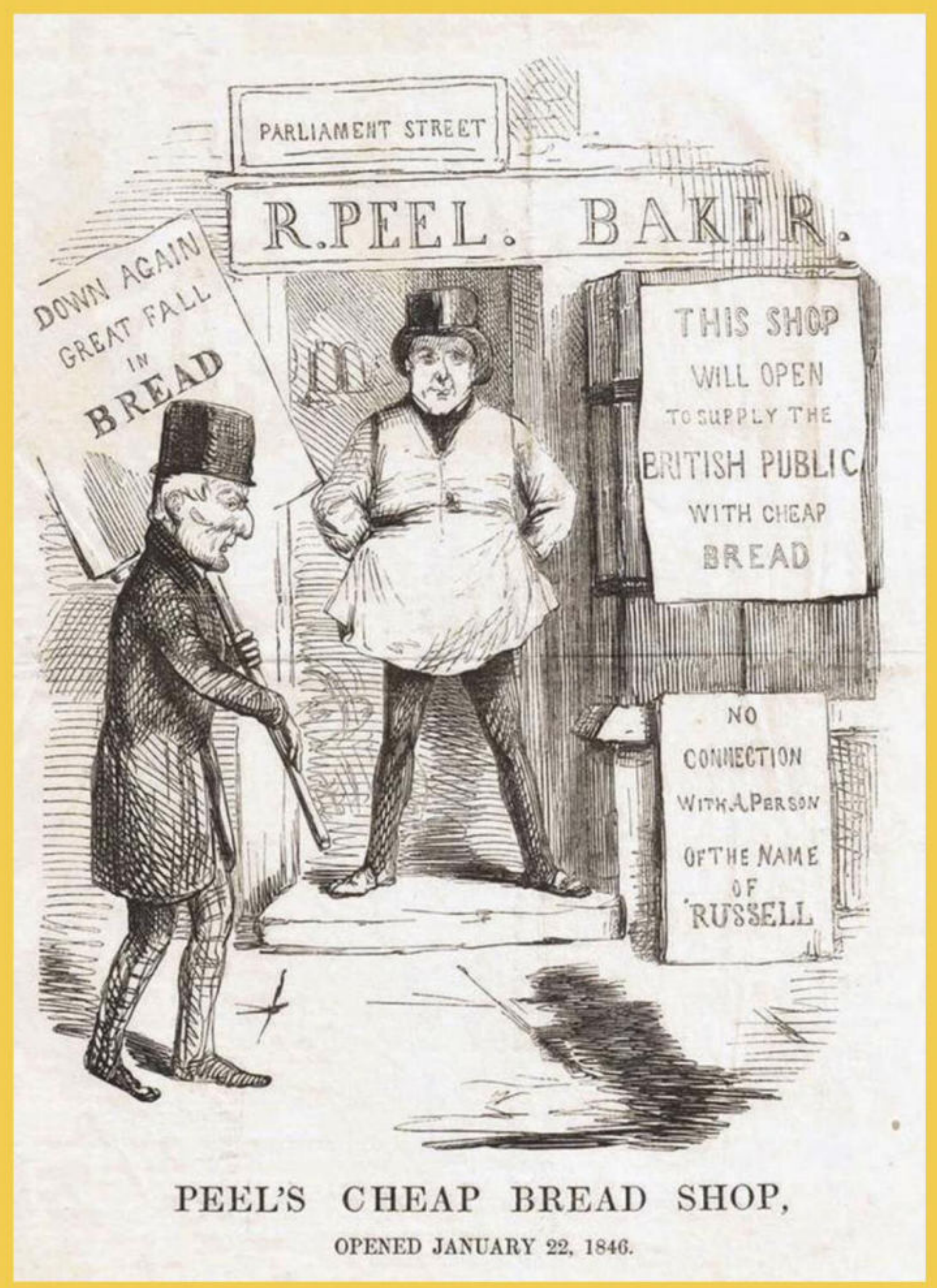
His second administration reintroduced income tax and moved towards free trade, removing tariffs on many imported goods. In 1845, the Irish famine gave him the excuse to tackle the Corn Laws, earning the undying hatred of protectionist Tory landowners and splitting the party.

Peel died in 1850 after being thrown from his horse and crushed when the animal trampled on him on Constitution Hill near Buckingham Palace.

Tories argued that the fuss around the potato famine was an exaggeration… the Irish were lazy and improvident

Nevertheless, the old soldier believed in loyalty and would remain by the prime minister's side. "A good government for the country is more important than the Corn Laws or any other consideration," he said.

In December 1845, Lord John Russell, leader of the Whigs, tightened the pressure on Peel by announcing his conversion to repeal. With his cabinet divided, Peel resigned but was back a fortnight later when Russell was unable to form a government from among his squabbling colleagues. Queen Victoria, her former dislike of Peel dissipated under the influence of Prince Albert, breathed a sigh of relief. He was, she noted in her journal, "the only person fitted to govern the country". She, too, would back him through the crisis.


PARLIAMENT STREET
R.PEEL. BAKER.
DOWN AGAIN GREAT FALL IN BREAD
THIS SHOP WILL OPEN TO SUPPLY THE BRITISH PUBLIC WITH CHEAP BREAD
NO CONNECTION WITH A PERSON OF THE NAME OF RUSSELL
PEEL'S CHEAP BREAD SHOP,
OPENED JANUARY 22, 1846.

Dough boys

In this *Punch* cartoon from 1846, Robert Peel is a baker and the Duke of Wellington carries a placard advertising cheap bread. The duke played a key, if unenthusiastic, role in repealing the Corn Laws

BRIDGEMAN

The professional bowler

Peel lost two cabinet ministers, and underestimated Tory backbench opposition, because his opponents in the party had found an unlikely champion in Benjamin Disraeli: flamboyant, impecunious and an outsider due to his Jewish heritage. Although a Christian, Disraeli was described as "a Jew d'esprit" by a witty Tory, and by another as "a professional bowler we take round with us" – a reference to the aristocrat-sponsored cricket teams then staffed by paid players. But Disraeli, who had been denied ministerial office by Peel, seized the chance to excoriate his party leader repeatedly during the debates over the coming months as the repeal bill wended its way through the Commons.

The debate – held mostly late at night in the candlelit Lords chamber, because the Commons was still being rebuilt following the fire of 1834 – became rowdy, as many MPs returned from dining. Peel diligently laid out the economic case for repeal, ponderously reciting statistics showing its benefits, and would then have to listen to Disraeli standing behind him, wittily and remorselessly undermining his case. Disraeli did so in highly personal terms, cheered on by his colleagues: Peel was the thief of other men's intellect, without an original idea of his own (that must have stung). He was like a coachman in directing the affairs of state: "no more a great statesman than the man who gets up behind the carriage is a great whip".

The backbench laughter grew more raucous as Disraeli's attacks gave them confidence. Peel, used to being heard respectfully, grew rattled and close to tears. "I have abandoned no duty and betrayed no trust," he insisted during the second reading debate. "I have listened to the attacks on me with sorrow but not with anger… Really, these interruptions are very unpleasant."

Tories sneered at the use of the famine as a reason for repeal: it was an exaggeration; the Irish were lazy and improvident. Peel responded with real anger: "Are you to hesitate in averting famine because it possibly may not come? Good God… how much diarrhoea and bloody flux and dysentery (must) a people bear before it becomes necessary for you to provide them with food?"

Attacks on Peel became increasingly overwrought. Lord George Bentinck, Disraeli's ally, effectively accused Peel of killing his relative, the former prime minister George Canning, 20 years earlier by refusing to serve in his cabinet – Peel had to be talked out of challenging him to a duel for that.

On a sweltering night in June, there was a final outburst from the backbencher Eliot Yorke, the MP for Cambridgeshire, demanding that the bill be called the Foreign Lands Improvement Bill, because it "would displace the labour of our hardworking countrymen in order to give employment to foreign serfs".

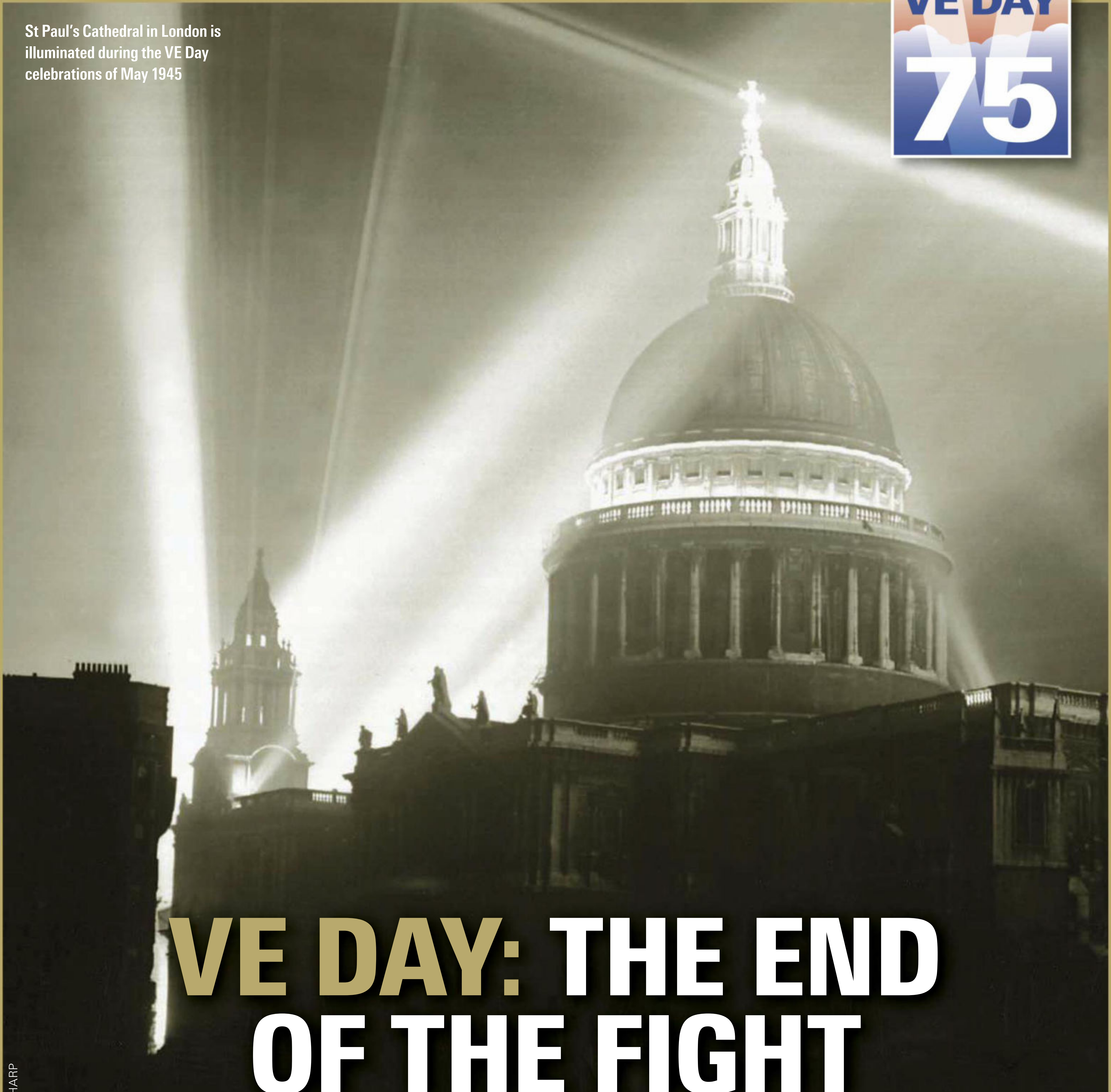
These interventions may have been incredibly painful to Peel but they never seriously threatened repeal, which passed the Commons with Whig support and went through the Lords swiftly under Wellington's surveillance. However, two-thirds of Tories opposed the bill. In all, 86 per cent of Tory county MPs and 80 per cent of county office holders voted against.

Peel's moment of triumph was short-lived. A few hours later, the rebels combined with the Whigs to vote down an Irish coercion bill designed to strengthen security – which all would normally have supported – purely to bring down the government. Peel resigned.

About 90 Peelites formed an independent bloc: most would eventually join what became the Liberal Party. Within four years, Peel was dead – and by then, too, Disraeli had convinced the Tories that the Corn Laws were a lost cause. H

Stephen Bates is a former senior correspondent with *The Guardian*. His books include *Two Nations: Britain in 1846* (Head of Zeus, 2015)

LISTEN To hear Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss the Corn Laws on BBC Radio 4's **In Our Time**, go to *bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03dvbyk*



St Paul's Cathedral in London is illuminated during the VE Day celebrations of May 1945

VE DAY: THE END OF THE FIGHT

On the 75th anniversary of Allied victory in Europe, this 24-page supplement revisits the closing moments of the battle against Nazism. Discover how the Axis was vanquished and why May 1945 wasn't a time of joy for everyone

ALAMY/PICTURE CONSULTANT: EVERETT SHARP

The bitter taste of victory

Across Europe the killings continued, and millions were starving, homeless and traumatised. Little wonder, writes **Keith Lowe**, that celebrations marking the end of the war were often muted

Today, Britain remembers VE Day as a moment of victory and celebration. But in mainland Europe, memories are sometimes a little more complicated.

On 8 May 1945, huge crowds took to the streets to drink and dance the night away in Paris and Brussels, just as they did in London. But according to the French newspaper *Libération*, "It was only the young who felt exuberant" – among the older generations there was, instead, an air of indefinable melancholy.

In Rome, according to at least one witness, "the atmosphere was sober and calm, even among the civilians". In a letter to his wife, shortly after the celebrations, Len Scott, a former journalist, claimed that despite a certain amount of "feeble cheering", the celebrations in the Italian capital passed "as uneventfully as a church parade".

In some parts of Europe, there were no celebrations at all. In Prague, for example, the last German units did not surrender until 9 May: amid continued fighting and chaos, there was no time for organised festivities. In parts of northern Yugoslavia, fighting continued for another week.

One of the most vivid accounts of VE Day in mainland Europe was given by the French fighter pilot Pierre Clostermann, who was stationed in Fassberg in Germany when the Armistice was announced. According to Clostermann, the mood on his airfield on 8 May 1945 was downright gloomy. "That evening in the mess was like some extraordinary vigil over a corpse," he later wrote. "The pilots were slumped in their chairs – no one spoke a word, or sang, or anything." Late in the evening, someone turned on the wireless: the BBC was reporting on the celebrations in Trafalgar Square. "All eyes turned towards the set, and in them you could read a kind of hatred." Eventually someone threw a bottle at the wireless, smashing it. One by one they all went to bed.

Reactions like this were not typical, but neither were they unique. To understand them, one must first appreciate the events that led up to VE Day, and the conditions that pervaded across the continent as the war came to its end.

The year 1945 was not only one of victory: it was also a time of extreme violence. In Belgium, it began with a massacre. The German army had just launched a massive counterattack against the Allies in the Ardennes, and returning SS units had committed a string of atrocities against soldiers and civilians alike. So on New Year's Day, some members of the US 11th Armored Division decided to take their revenge. Near the village of Chenogne they gathered together 60 or so German prisoners in a field and opened fire on them with machine guns. It was not an auspicious start to the year.

Over the next four months, the Allies launched a series of offensives across Europe that were every bit as devastating as the German assault five years earlier. In January, they neutralised the German attack in the Ardennes. In February, they struck towards the heart of Germany, crossing the Rhine in late March. Shortly afterwards, in April, they launched separate attacks to liberate the northern parts of Italy and the Netherlands.

Hollow victory Charles de Gaulle (centre), leader of the Free French, attends Paris VE Day celebrations. But many faced privation and uncertainty as the war drew to a close

"The pilots were slumped in their chairs. No one spoke a word, or sang, or anything"

Even more devastating was the war that was being raged in the air. By the beginning of 1945, the German air force had all but ceased to exist, and the Allies were able to bomb German cities almost unopposed. In February and March, the RAF and the US Army Air Force laid waste to dozens of cities, including Dresden, Pforzheim and Würzburg. The desolation caused by these attacks brought frequent comparisons to Armageddon. On seeing the devastation of Munich in 1945, the diarist Victor Klemperer declared: "It truly did almost make one think that a Last Judgment was imminent."

By the end of April, it was obvious even to Hitler that there could be only one end to this war. The final straw came when his ally, Benito Mussolini, was captured in Italy. He was executed on 28 April and his body was put on display, hanging by its feet, in a piazza in Milan. Not wishing to suffer the same fate, Hitler committed suicide two days later. He left instructions for his body to be burned.

Over the next few days, a series of surrenders followed. Berlin fell on 2 May. The German armies in north-west Europe surrendered to Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery on 4 May. On 7 May, in the French city of Reims, members of the German High Command signed an unconditional surrender of all German troops. The following day, shortly before midnight, a final, definitive surrender was signed in Berlin. The war in Europe had formally come to an end.

Senseless destruction

If the war in the west involved a certain amount of brutality, atrocity and humiliation, on the eastern front things were far worse.

The Red Army finally crossed the Vistula around Warsaw on 12 January 1945. Over the next four months it overran the rest of Poland, East Prussia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and parts of Austria. By the end of March it had reached the Oder river; and by 25 April it had encircled Berlin. The battle to subdue the German capital during the next two weeks was among the most vicious encounters of the entire war.

This relentless drive across eastern Europe cost the Soviets more than half a million casualties. Germany, meanwhile, lost more than 1.2 million dead, wounded and missing.

The advance of the Red Army in the last four months of the war was one of the most impressive military feats of modern times. Unfortunately, the undoubted heroism of Soviet soldiers has long been overshadowed by their simultaneous savagery. When they arrived on German territory, they regularly torched villages, massacred civilians, and occasionally also mutilated their bodies

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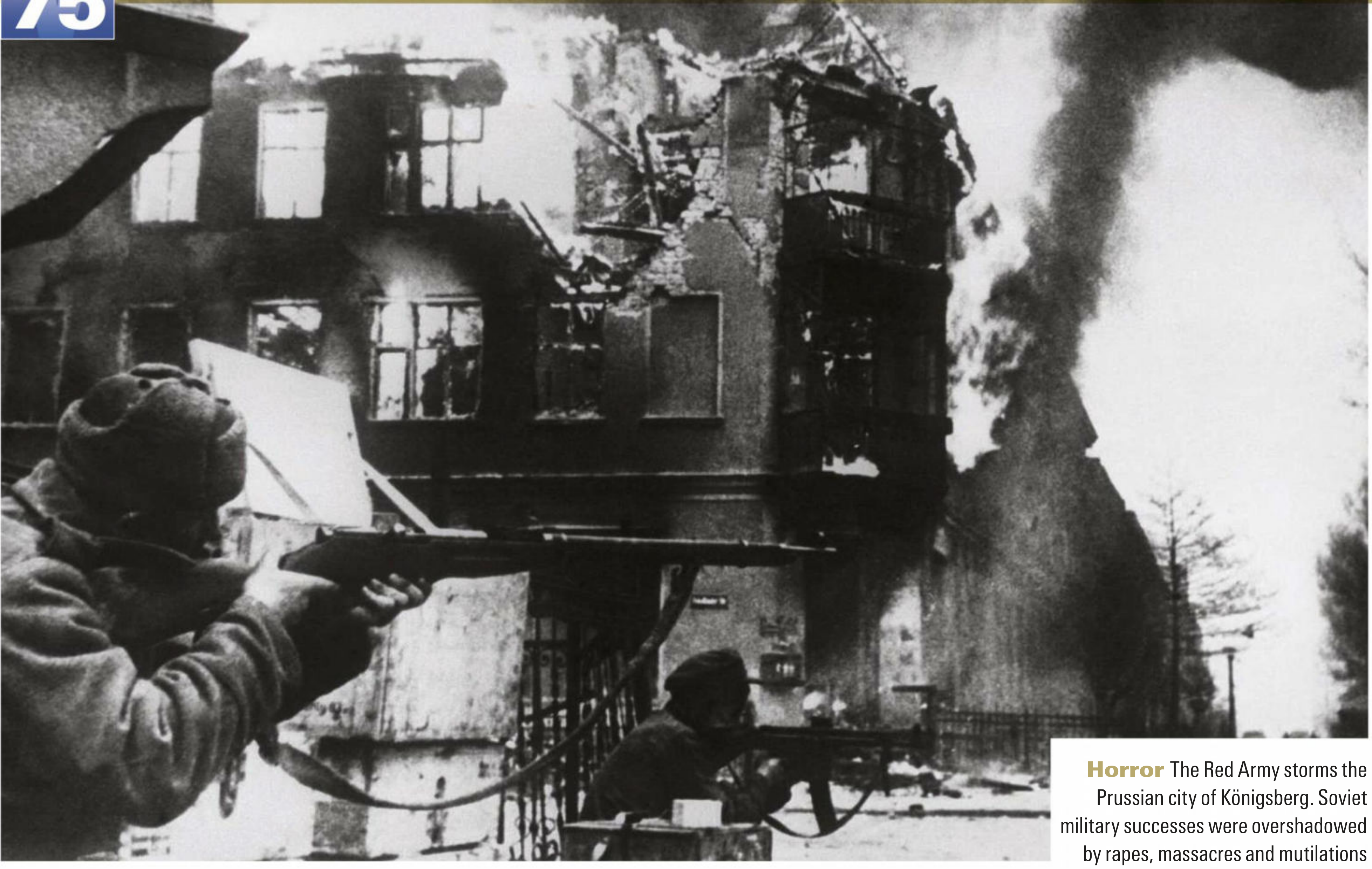

Horror The Red Army storms the Prussian city of Königsberg. Soviet military successes were overshadowed by rapes, massacres and mutilations

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and put them on display. At Metgethen in East Prussia, witnesses found the bodies of children who had been bayoneted and beaten to death. In Gross Heydekrug, a woman was crucified on the altar of the local church, with two German soldiers similarly strung up on either side.

Those who tried to stop this senseless destruction were often censured by their fellow Soviets for displaying "undue compassion towards the enemy". For example, when Lev Kopelev, a propaganda officer for the Red Army, publicly criticised his fellow soldiers for the crimes they were committing, he was arrested and thrown in prison. He was not released for 10 years.

Women had particular reason to be fearful. The mass rape that occurred when the Red Army overran eastern and central Europe in 1945 was one of the most widespread atrocities of the whole war. It was not only German women who suffered, but also Hungarians, Austrians and even women in countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia, which were supposed to be allies of the Soviet Union. In Vienna alone, according to contemporary medical records, 87,000 women were raped during and after the liberation. Estimates for Europe as a whole range between two and three million victims.

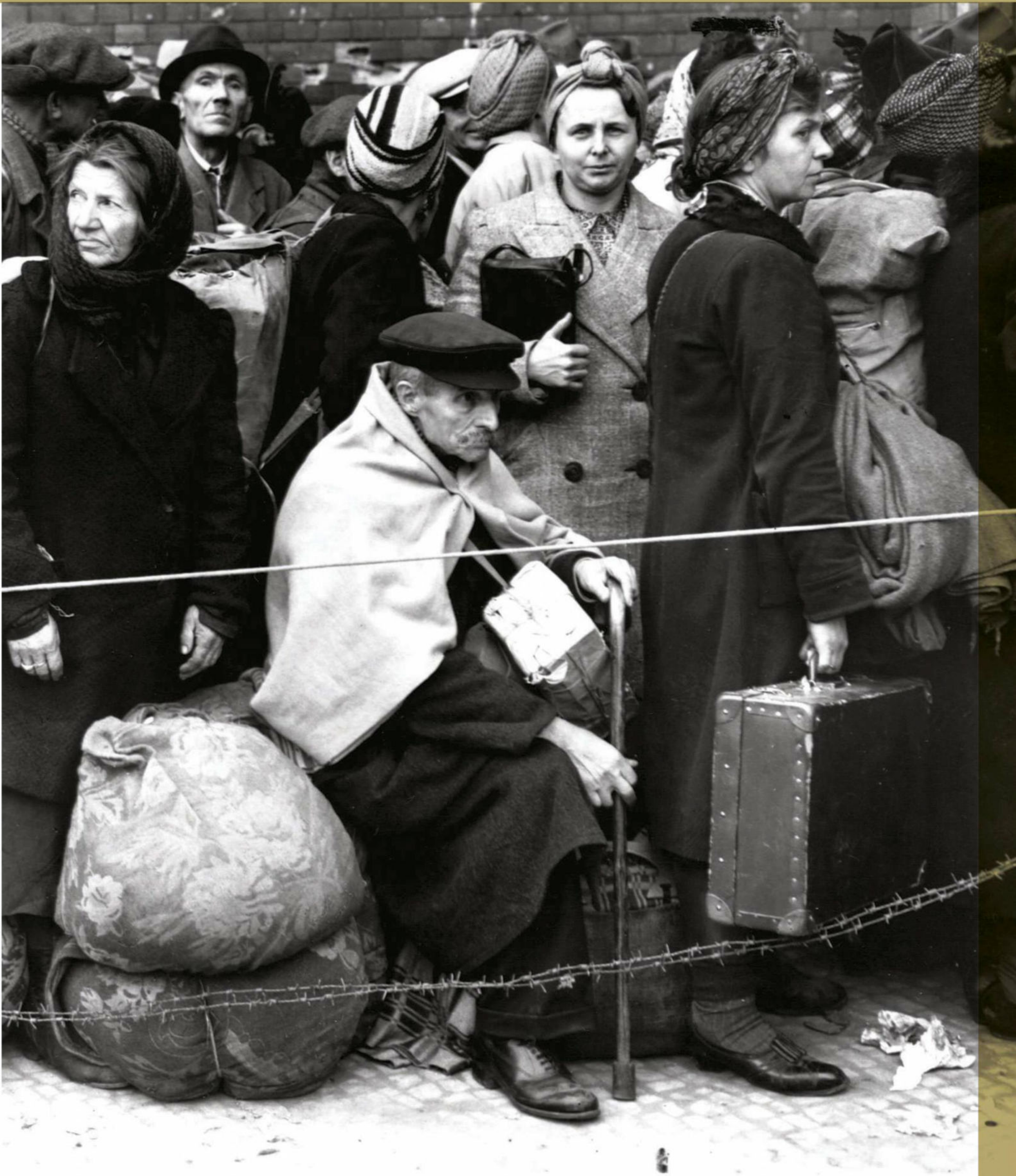
Women had reason to be fearful. In Vienna, 87,000 were raped during and after the liberation

In the last months of the war, reports of atrocities by the Red Army were used by the Nazis as propaganda to galvanise the German people. However, these reports also caused a mass panic in central and eastern Europe, especially among people with German heritage. Millions of refugees began to stream westwards, including some four million from the eastern reaches of Germany alone. (This mass migration would continue after the war, when the remaining people with German ancestry were forcibly expelled from countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.)

Alongside these German refugees were hundreds of thousands of others who were force-marched into Germany against their will. These people were inmates from Germany's extensive network of concentration camps, slave labour camps and prisoner-of-war camps. Not wishing them to fall into enemy hands, the Nazis decided to evacuate them en masse. These evacuations were carried out in a hurry, in the depths of winter, without adequate food or clothing for the prisoners. As a consequence, they have come to be known by those who survived them as 'death marches'.

Marilka Ossowska was one such prisoner. She had spent two years working as a forced labourer in Auschwitz, Ravensbrück and Buchenwald, before being evacuated towards Czechoslovakia towards the end of the war. When I interviewed her in 2007, she told me that she and her fellow prisoners marched day and night for three days: anyone who could not keep up was shot and left on the road. One night, unable to take any more, she threw herself into a roadside ditch and waited for the column to move on. Miraculously, none of the guards saw her.

Marilka spent the last two weeks of the war in hiding. The reason why she was not recaptured and punished in the war's final days was that the whole system in Germany had begun to break down. And she was not



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Displaced German civilians await transport in Berlin. Many people of German descent in countries at war with the Reich, such as Poland, were brutally treated

Desperate measures
Orphaned or abandoned children are fed with UN rations in postwar Rome. Hunger was rife across the continent

Lines of dead
Civilians from the German city of Ludwigslust are forced to bury victims from the nearby Wöbbelin concentration camp, 7 May 1945

alone: forced labourers everywhere had begun to leave their jobs, and had taken to the roads in the hope of making their way home.

"Germany in 1945 was one huge ants' nest," she said. "There were Germans escaping from the Russians. There were all these prisoners of war… It was really incredible, teeming with people and movement."

When the war came to an end in 1945, there were at least 17 million such displaced persons in Germany alone. According to a study made in the 1950s, over 40 million people across Europe had become refugees of one sort or another during the war.

Marilka Ossowska did not remember any kind of celebration on VE Day: she was too busy simply trying to survive. While housewives in Britain were using up precious rations to bake cakes in celebration of the end of the war, Marilka had to make do with eating rapeseed flowers and nettles that she found beside the road.

Food riots and starvation

The situation was not much better for millions of people all across Europe in 1945. The war had systematically smashed transport links, making it impossible to move vital supplies around the continent. As a consequence, people everywhere were starving.

One of the possible explanations for the muted celebrations in Rome on VE Day was that the people were hungry. Housewives had already been involved in food riots in the city, and in December 1944 a 'hunger march' had been held in protest over shortages. At the end of the war, according to a report by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, food riots were continuing throughout the country.

In Poland and Ukraine, which had been stripped bare by the various armies that had passed through, the situation was even worse. During the occupation, the Nazis had followed a deliberate policy of requisitioning food at the expense of the civilian population. In Kharkiv alone, starvation helped to cause some 70–80,000 deaths. By the time the Soviets returned, there was no farm machinery left and not enough workers to man the farms – so the starvation continued.

In the Netherlands, one of the last places in Europe to be liberated, the situation became so bad that people resorted to eating tulip bulbs. By the end of the war, the official food ration in the west of the country was just 400 calories per day – that is, about half the amount received by the inmates of the Belsen concentration camp. In such circumstances, the black market became essential to survival, and people from all the major cities regularly trudged out to the countryside in the hope of trading their coats or watches for food. By the time the Allies arrived, according to the writer Erik Hazelhoff Roelfzema, cities like Amsterdam were unrecognisable. Roelfzema had spent much of the war in Britain, flying with the RAF, and was shocked by the state of his country on VE Day. "Every town throbbed with frenzied celebration, but underneath the boozing and the singing and the sex, times were sad. There had been too much suffering, too much destruction, too much death. Under the shrill flags everything was drab and grey."

It is impossible to remember the end of the war without also recalling perhaps its greatest tragedy: the murder of millions of so-called *Untermenschen* in what would later become known as the Shoah, or the Holocaust.

That the Nazis had been systematically killing Jews in eastern Europe was well-known by 1945: the Soviets had already uncovered evidence of mass killings at Majdanek, Treblinka and Babi Yar. But it was not until Auschwitz was liberated at the end of January 1945 that the industrial nature of the killings was revealed. Soon, the western

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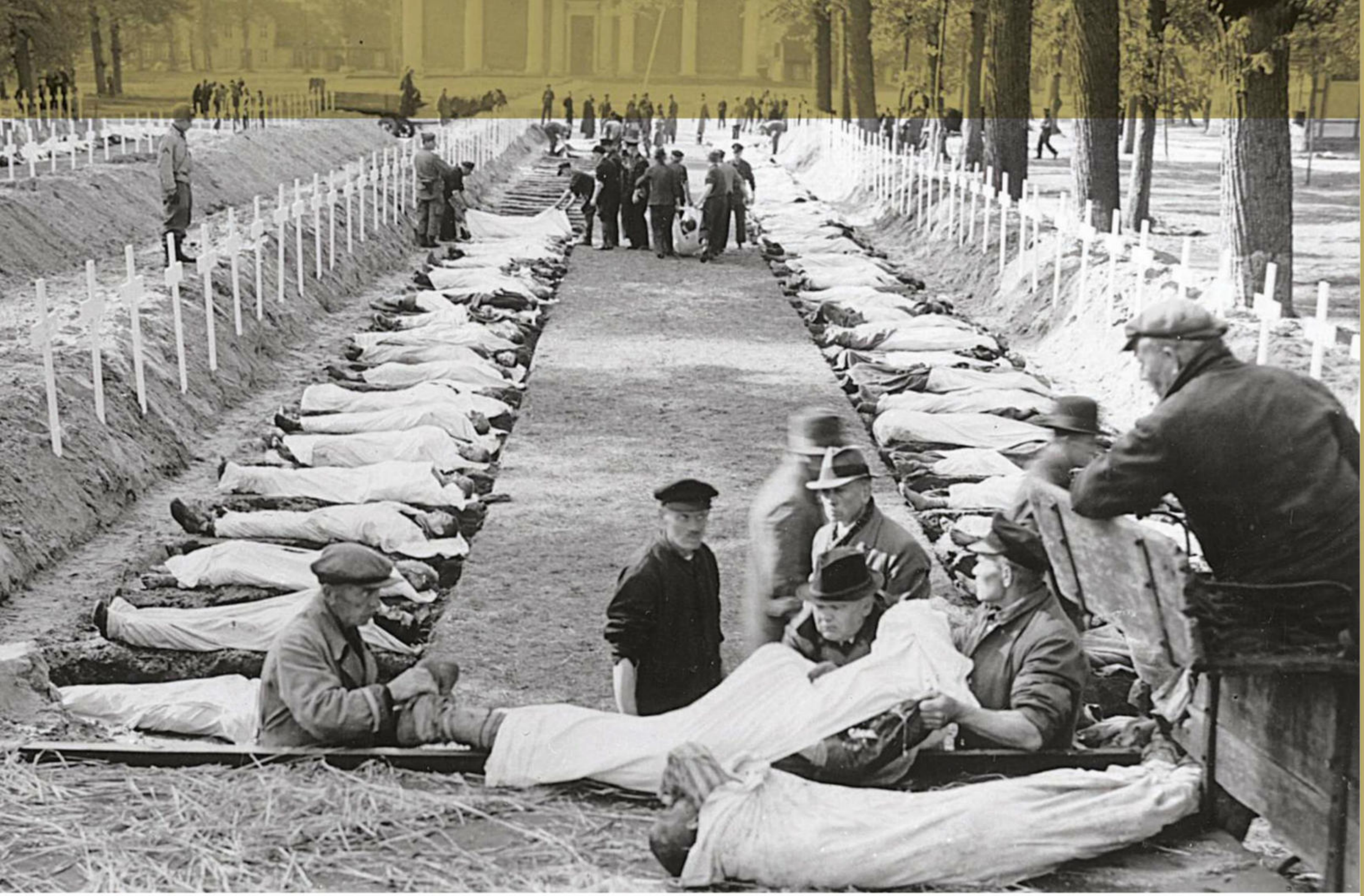

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Allies were also coming across concentration camps. In April, the British and Americans liberated Belsen, Buchenwald and Dachau, and they too began to appreciate the full scale of what had been done to the Jews of Europe.

For the US war crimes investigator Benjamin Ferencz, this was a particularly traumatic time. The concentration camps he visited were, he said, "all basically similar: dead bodies strewn across the camp grounds, piles of skin and bones, cadavers piled up like cordwood before the burning crematoria, helpless skeletons with diarrhoea, dysentery, typhus, TB, pneumonia and other ailments, retching in their louse-ridden bunks or on the ground with only their pathetic eyes pleading for help".

After such sights, Ferencz did not feel much like celebrating VE Day.

David Bradford, a British medical student taken to Bergen-Belsen by the Red Cross to help with emergency relief work, was equally stunned by the horrors that he witnessed. He spent 8 May 1945 doling out cigarettes and food to his patients, many of whom were too weak to eat, let alone celebrate. The level of despair in the camp was almost unbearable. "They couldn't see any future – what was VE Day to them? Even if they managed to live, they were left only with the prospect of going back to ruined cities in Poland and Czechoslovakia."

"Bodies were piled like cordwood, and helpless skeletons retched in their louse-ridden bunks"

The German surrender on 8 May 1945 brought an end to the Holocaust, but the genocide and its consequences have continued to haunt Europe ever since.

Given all that had happened in the final months of the war, it is perhaps not surprising that VE Day was not celebrated in Europe with the same enthusiasm that it was in Britain. After all they had seen and experienced, many soldiers did not feel much like celebrating. They were homesick, and anxious about what the future might now hold. Many were mourning dead comrades, and still felt vengeful towards their defeated foes. "In the desperation and the gloom and the sadness of Europe there was no VE Day," claimed Phil Loffman, an Australian NCO who, like Marilka Ossowska, had escaped from German captivity in April 1945. "We were with the Russians and there was nothing celebrated. The war was over and there were still dead people and people being shot."

For civilians in Europe, it was often even worse. They lived in a world that had been shattered by violence. At least 35 million people had been killed, and perhaps as many as 50 million – nobody could be sure, because the continent was in such a state of chaos. It would take years for economic and political stability to return, and decades before their devastated towns and cities could be rebuilt.

The psychological legacy was perhaps even greater still. Which is why the end of the Second World War is still being commemorated, all over Europe, even 75 years later. H

Keith Lowe is the author of *Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II* (Viking, 2012). His latest book, *Prisoners of History: What Monuments to the Second World War Tell Us About Our History and Ourselves*, was published by HarperCollins in April

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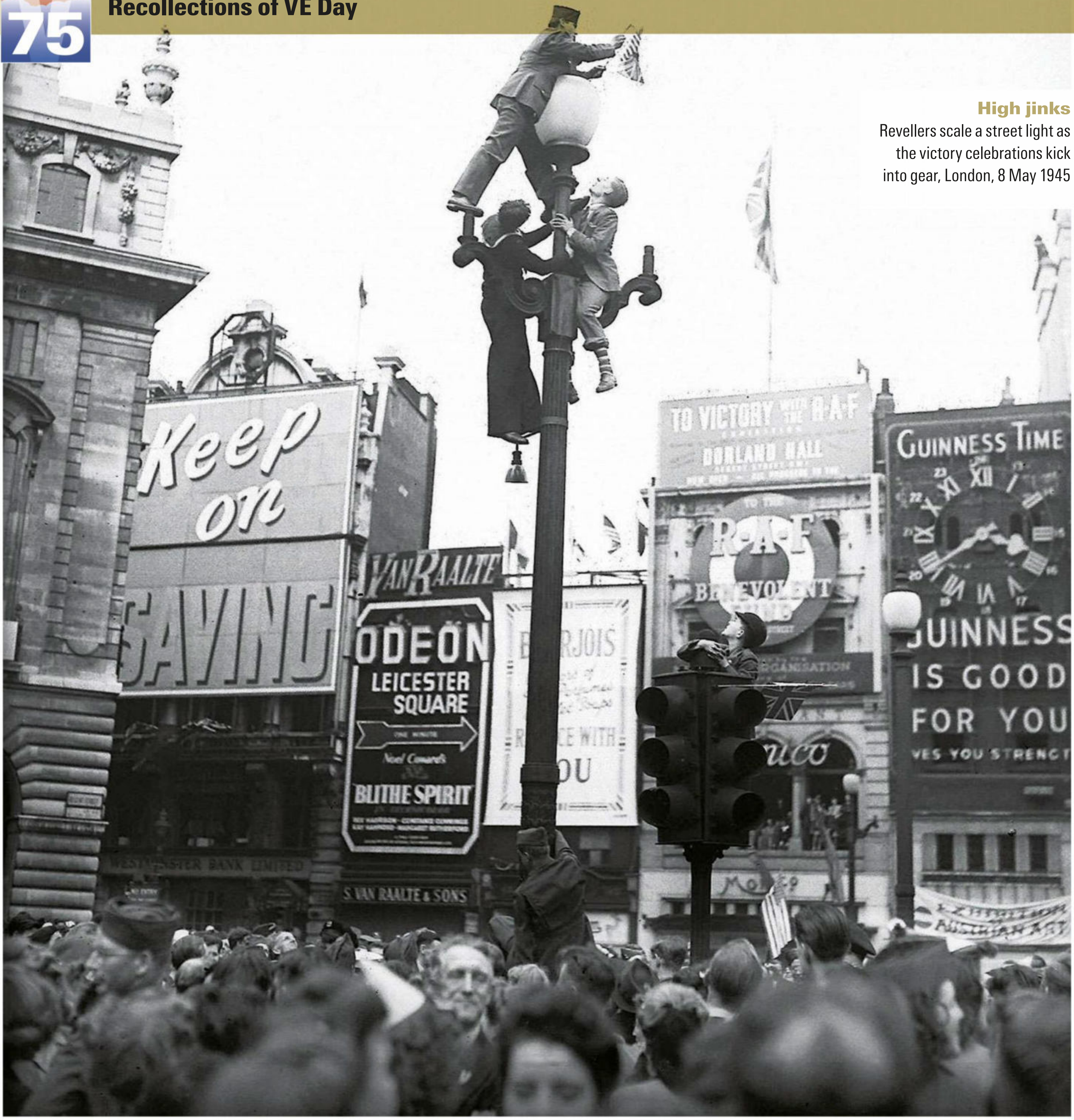
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ODEON
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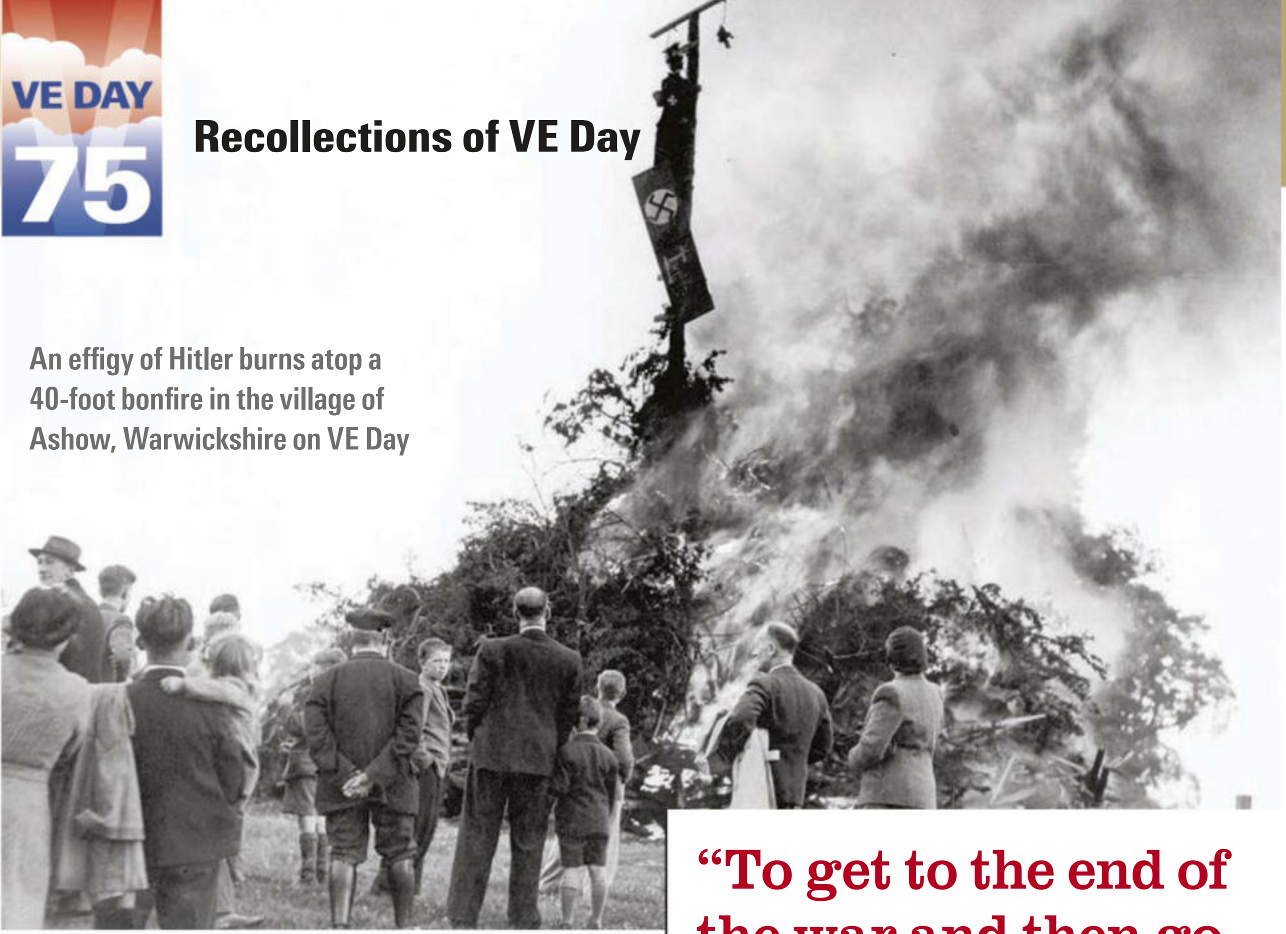
High jinks
Revellers scale a street light as the victory celebrations kick into gear, London, 8 May 1945

MIRRORPIX

"Hooray! The war is ended"

From the homesick Jewish refugee to the over-exuberant sailor who landed himself in jail, **Peter Hart** compiles five people's recollections of VE Day



An effigy of Hitler burns atop a 40-foot bonfire in the village of Ashow, Warwickshire on VE Day

"I just wanted to see my parents again. I just wanted to go home"

One of **Vera Schaufield**'s most vivid memories of VE Day was of getting into trouble with her schoolteacher. Six years earlier, Vera had bid her parents goodbye and become one of the 669 Jewish children from Czechoslovakia evacuated to England on the Kindertransport, organised by the British humanitarian Nicholas Winton. She was now a refugee suffering from homesickness. She had more reason than most to look forward to the end of the war.

"We were sitting in the classroom and the teacher was reading," she recalled. "Someone came into the room and spoke to her and she said: 'I have something to tell you: the war is ended!' I said: 'Hooray!' She sent me out for causing a disturbance. I stood outside the classroom with all these mixed thoughts. My parents were going to be cross, because I couldn't speak to them in Czech or German. Would I be able to take my school certificate? I just wanted to see my parents again. I just wanted to go home."

Sadly, it was not to be. Schaufield's parents had been transported to Auschwitz and were already dead.

Vera Schaufield was evacuated to England on the Kindertransport

"To get to the end of the war and then go and incinerate myself on VE Day was the height of stupidity"

One of the greatest days of **David Elliot**'s young life was almost the last. For David, it had been a long war. Despite some pacifist inclination, he had joined up as a stretcher-bearer and served in France until he was evacuated from Dunkirk in June 1940. He then served with the South Notts Hussars in north Africa, Sicily and north-west Europe. On VE Day, they had come to a halt near the town of Coesfeld in Germany.

David decided that the best way to celebrate would be to build a massive bonfire with an effigy of Hitler. "We were all mixed up, the officers and the ranks, all terrifically friendly and all very inebriated! I was very worried because it had been raining and everything was wet. It was 8 to 10-feet high and fairly large with this dummy of Hitler on the top. I'd kept a can of petrol to make sure the bonfire went well." He then managed to put himself in great danger on that day of peace.

"I climbed up on top of this bonfire, the men were all surrounding it – and I noticed a lot of them had got lighted brands [flaming torches]. I started pouring this petrol down from the top, a good 10 or 12 feet up in the air." It was at this point that Elliott realised how stupid he had been. "To get right through to the end of the war to go and incinerate myself on VE Day was the height of stupidity." Luckily, the men heard his desperate shouts to "Wait!" while he climbed down. "Then with a great cheer they threw the lighted brands on the fire and it went up in a great whoosh! Everyone was madly cheering."

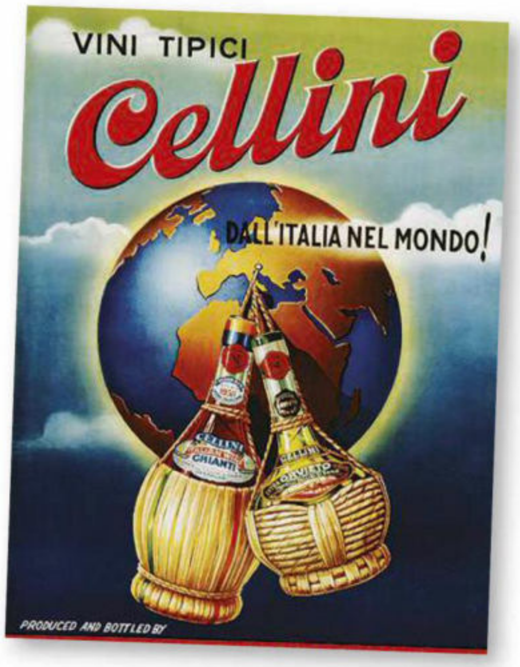
"I suppose some live ammunition went off – but not officially! We had quite a party"

When **Major Alan Hay**'s men found out that the war was over, most had only one thing on their minds: "It was, 'Get your hands on any vino!'"

Alan, a company commander with the 16th Durham Light Infantry, had had a tough war, serving with the Durhams in Italy and Greece since December 1943. They had been called back to Italy, where they were in reserve. The Germans were on the retreat, but Alan feared they might be planning a bloody last stand in the Alps. Little wonder, then, that when the good news arrived on 8 May 1945, the battalion was jubilant.

"We had a party, first of all firing off all the Very Lights [a type of flare], flashes and signal flares. I suppose some live ammunition went off – but not officially! All the lights were up in the air and we had quite a party."

They organised a best-dressed jeep competition. "First of all, camouflage netting, but anything that would give a bit of colour. They got balloons from somewhere, went round the Italians and got some dresses from them. Two of the officers dressed up as women wearing frocks, with wigs and make-up to match. One of the jeeps was disguised as a gondola. It was just a huge laugh, drinking and absolutely relaxing. Anything that was stupid we were very good at – and I was right in the thick of it."



Drinking Italian wine was a top priority for the 16th Durham Light Infantry on VE Day

MIRRORPIX/HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY TRUST/GETTY

ABOVE: **Crowds flock to Buckingham Palace to celebrate with the royal family on VE Day. Among them was Stan Suffling, pictured, right, in 1939 with his sister Joan while evacuated to St Albans**

"At Buckingham Palace, we saw the royal family for the first time. They looked like waxworks"

Born in London in 1928, **Stan Suffling** had been evacuated to St Albans and then Harpenden in 1939. As a pupil at the London Regent Street School, he was evacuated again with the school on its relocation to Minehead.

Stan returned to London in 1944, just in time to experience the stresses of the German V1 and V2 raids. On VE Day, he and a small group of friends went into the centre of London to revel in the celebrations: "We made our way down the Mall to Buckingham Palace. We saw members of the royal family; it was the first time I'd ever seen them. At that time, they used to appear heavily made-up with powder and rouge – they looked like waxworks. That amazed me."

They walked back to Piccadilly Circus and stood together on the corner of Shaftesbury Avenue and Great Windmill Street. "It was an amazing scene. It was absolutely milling with people – it was an impossibility to move. We enjoyed the festivities; everybody was talking to everybody. There were members of the forces, a lot of Americans being feted. There were people climbing up the top of lampposts, right up and sitting on the top. Many were drunk. We were not among that crowd – we were just school kids. Those that weren't drunk with alcohol were drunk with excitement. It was the most exciting day of my life up to then!"

"As our feet hit the deck we were thrown into the back of a Black Maria and whipped off to jail!"

"As you can imagine we were highly delighted. We'd survived!" That was **Harold Fine**'s overriding memory of VE Day. Fine was a wireless telegraphist who had served aboard HMS *Calder* since its commission in 1943. The ship had been busy on convoy escort duties in the Atlantic and Mediterranean, before carrying out anti-submarine patrols off Ireland and Scotland. That night Harold went ashore with a bunch of his shipmates. They got drunk and returned to the ship the worse for wear. But that wasn't the end of their evening.

"Somebody said: 'Why waste the night?' About six of us decided to go ashore again. I don't think there was any jetty sentry, things were very relaxed to say the least!" They forced a pub landlord to serve them – even though it was by then getting late – then moved further into town clutching various bottles. "Somebody dared us to climb up Queen Victoria's statue outside the City Hall in Belfast. A dare in those days was like red rag to a bull. Up we went! We were knocking the heads of these bottles and drinking. It was decided – very stupidly – to drop these on the crowd gathered underneath. I'm glad to say we didn't hit anybody.

"It didn't take very long before two RUC men clambered up behind us and said: 'Come on Jack, you're causing trouble, you'd better come down.' We went down very quietly and peacefully. As our feet hit the deck we were physically thrown into the back of a Black Maria and whipped off to Crumlin Road Jail!"

Come the dawn, they were woken up with a cup of tea and released without charge. "The state of my head!" Their VE Day was over. H

Harold Fine landed himself in hot water for climbing up Queen Victoria's statue outside Belfast City Hall

Peter Hart was the oral historian at the Imperial War Museum. His new book, *At Close Range: Life and Death in an Artillery Regiment, 1939–45*, is due to be published by Profile in May

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The war **without** an end

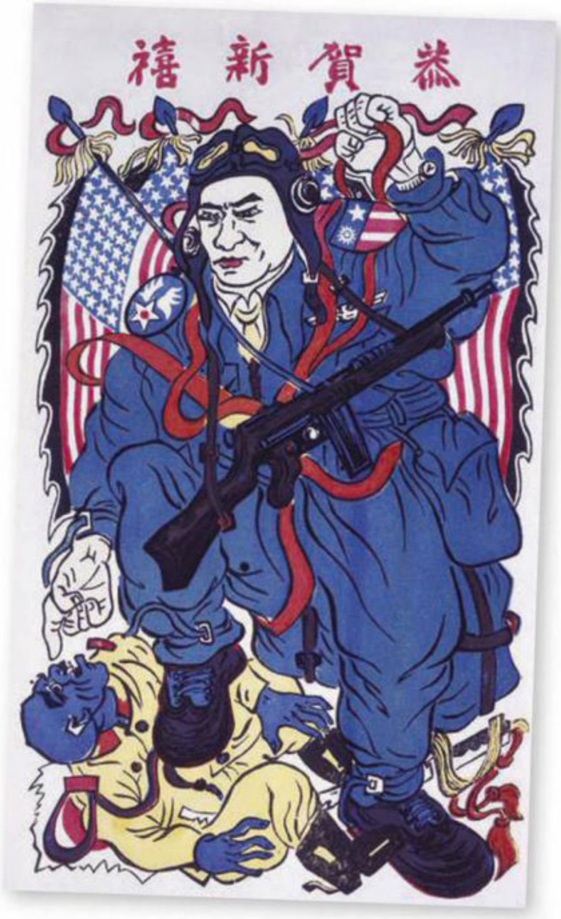
By late 1943, Allied leaders knew they would win the war – they just didn't know when. This uncertainty dogged the final stages, writes **Dan Todman**

On 7 December 1943, the men in charge of the Anglo-American alliance dined in a Cairo hotel. It had been an exhausting few weeks: ill-mannered discussions with the Chinese leader, Chiang Kai-shek, in the Egyptian capital; a tense conference with the Soviet leader, Josef Stalin, in Tehran; then back to Cairo to finish their own disputes.

Stage-managed by the Americans to avoid any British challenge, the conferences had demonstrated to the British prime minister, Winston Churchill, how calamitously his country's international power had declined. As the prime minister put it: "A bloody lot" had "gone wrong." Having got what he wanted, the US president, Franklin Roosevelt, had left that morning. The remaining participants – including Churchill and the top servicemen from both sides of the Atlantic – were all sick of the sight of each other, but glad the wrangling was over. The drink flowed and Churchill began to recover his equilibrium. Over dinner, he got the generals to place bets on when the war against Germany would end. The most optimistic gave him 6/4 odds on March 1944; the most pessimistic, that November.

This anecdote highlights the difference between how the war was experienced, even by those most in the know about strategic planning, and how we think about it in historical perspective. We know the outcome and the timing. They knew they were going to win, but not how long it would take. If we want to understand what happened in those closing years of the conflict, we have to restore the uncertainties that shaped decisions at the time.

Unlike the First World War, this time the Allies knew well before the end that they were going to win. Between the winter of 1942 and the summer of 1943, a series of Axis reverses made it clear that Allied victory was inevitable. It was also apparent that there would be two ends: one in Europe, against Germany (Italy having surrendered in September 1943); and one in Asia and the Pacific, against Japan. How long there would be between the two remained unclear, but well into 1945 the assumption was that what the British called 'Stage II' of the war would last years, not months. The Americans, bearing the brunt in the Pacific, hoped that once Hitler was defeated, the Soviets would turn east and attack Japanese forces in Asia. This commitment would be given only once the war in Europe was settled to Stalin's satisfaction.



War ending? A leaflet from 1945 shows a US pilot stepping on a Japanese soldier. The text reads: "This American airman drives the Japanese from China's skies – give him your help!"

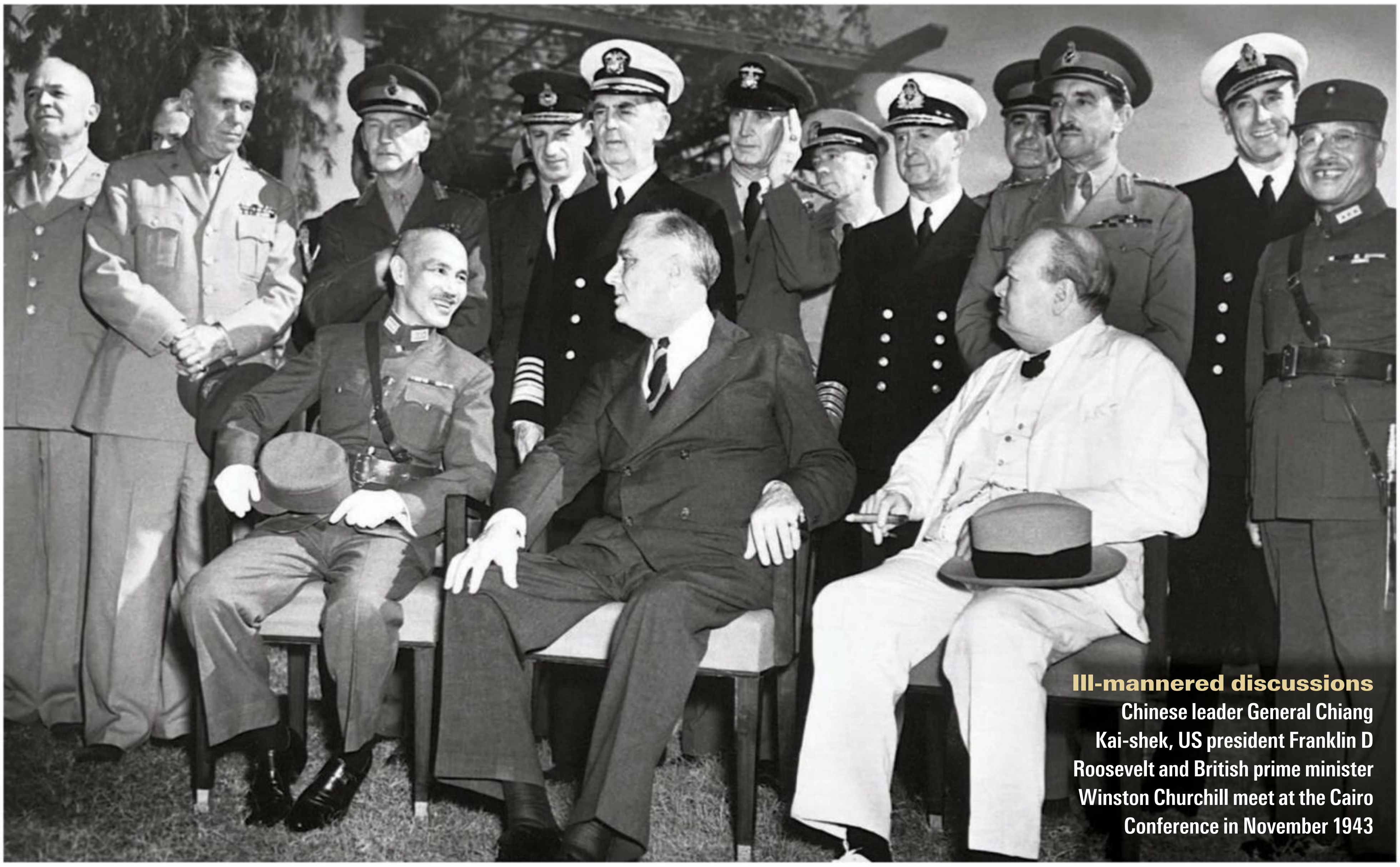
Even as Britain reached peak military power, its ability to shape the peace fell away

Why – even given the Allies' intelligence advantages – were the timings of this double end so difficult to predict? Partly because of the concertinaing effect on time and space of contemporary weapons systems, and the demands they placed on maintenance and supply, which allowed both rapid victories and stubborn defence. Superimposed on the vast areas conquered by the Axis powers from 1940–42, these generated uncertainty about when decisive power could take effect.

The British had long been over-optimistic about their ability to crack the German people's willingness to continue the war. They underestimated how far plundered resources, indoctrination and control would sustain the Nazi war machine. In contrast, new technological capabilities rapidly extended the reach and impact of American sea and air power across the Pacific from the end of 1943. Brought to bear against the Japanese home islands, they ensured a quicker end to the far eastern war than anyone had anticipated.

The timing of peace had particular implications for the UK. British leaders grappled with the paradox that, even as the military power of the Commonwealth and empire reached its wartime peak, their ability to shape the peace fell away. As Churchill had experienced at Tehran, for all the firepower Britain could command on the battlefield, in

ALAMY



Ill-mannered discussions Chinese leader General Chiang Kai-shek, US president Franklin D Roosevelt and British prime minister Winston Churchill meet at the Cairo Conference in November 1943

Heavy duty German troops in action during the battle of Stalingrad in October 1942 – a costly reverse that spelled the beginning of the end for the Third Reich

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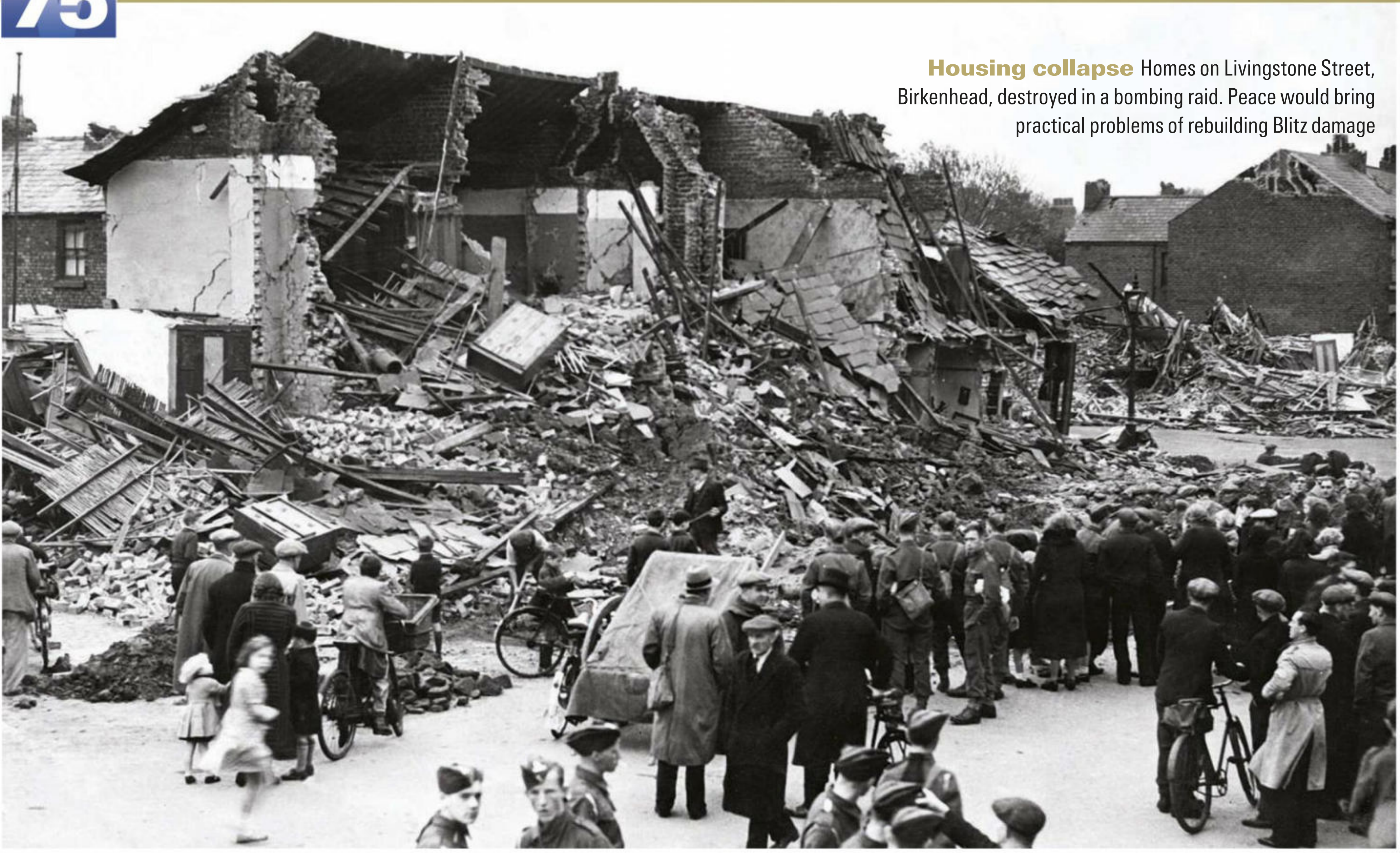
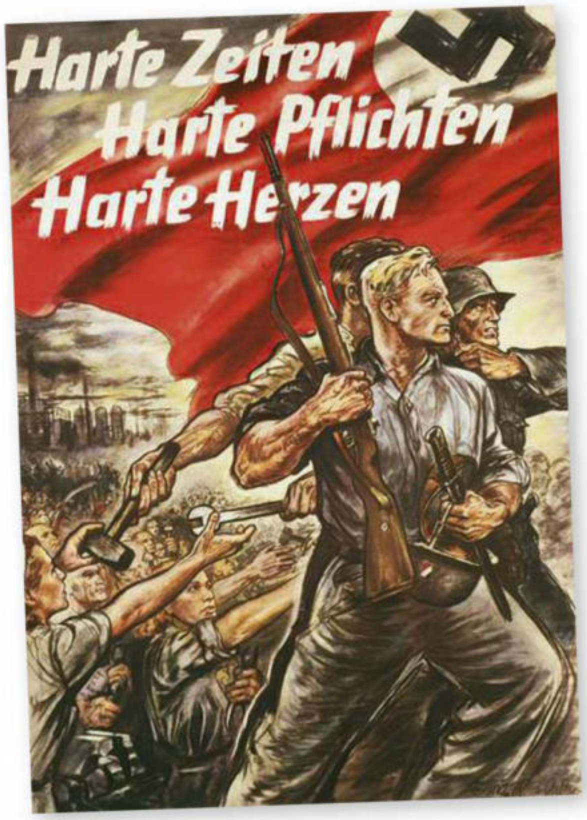


Housing collapse Homes on Livingstone Street, Birkenhead, destroyed in a bombing raid. Peace would bring practical problems of rebuilding Blitz damage



Not going quietly A Nazi propaganda poster from the final stages of the Second World War. The British underestimated the Germans' will to keep fighting

the face of surging US and Soviet strength, its leverage had been grievously diminished.

Simultaneously, the war had supercharged the forces of Asian nationalism, threatening the future of British colonial control across India and south-east Asia. In a world greatly changed by a conflict in which most Britons felt the UK had done more than its part, preserving what power the country had left was both emotionally resonant and a task that grew in complexity as world leaders argued over what came next.

The problems of peace

This desire to give Britain more say in the endgame affected the allocation of resources. By 1943, the British state had developed the means to move people between different sectors of the war effort to meet the changing demands of the conflict. Having already decided that the country had reached the point beyond which no further mobilisation of manpower was possible, at the end of 1943 the war cabinet agreed to act as if the fight against Germany would be over by the end of 1944, and shift personnel from manufacturing weapons into the armed forces ahead of the final campaign in Europe. This was a calculated gamble to maximise fighting strength in the short term. However, it also meant that, if a European war dragged on into 1945, Britain would be more dependent than ever on US military supplies.

Domestically, peace would bring great practical problems. How were blitzed houses to be rebuilt? How smoothly could millions of service personnel and war workers be demobilised into civilian life? Above all, how could an economy now heavily indebted, reliant on American Lend-Lease aid and shifted over to war production transition into one that could export enough to pay its way in peace?

The public mood mattered too: Britons looked forward to moving on from wartime austerity and regulation, but worried, after years of full employment, about the economic depression that everyone assumed would follow the onset of peace.

Promises of a better life were an important way to try to motivate service personnel and factory workers to keep doing their bit in a war that was already won. Real progress, however, was limited. In practice, many ministers could agree on the basics of a postwar settlement: greater state intervention, particularly during the period of transition; improved social welfare; better education. But the principles at stake – public v private ownership, individualism v universalism – aggravated party-political divides. Churchill told his Labour colleagues that "if

GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN

Special delivery The first Lend-Lease food shipment from the US to Britain in 1941. But aid was less forthcoming as the war progressed into Stage II

BRIDGEMAN

In Europe, the rapid advance of the Red Army threatened a Soviet domination of the continent

we hold together, we shall be more masters of our fate". But he failed to lead on reconstruction: in fact he thought such problems best put off until after the war.

All of these factors came to a head during the first nine months of 1944, driven on by the approach of the final offensives. While the Anglo-American armies gathered for the Normandy invasion, Churchill and the British chiefs of staff argued bitterly over strategy in the far east. Should the Royal Navy join the Americans in their thrust against Japan across the Pacific, as the chiefs preferred, and take part in the decisive campaign? Should resources be concentrated, as Churchill fantasised, on an expedition across the Indian Ocean to seize the northern tip of Sumatra, and from there to reconquer the imperial prize of Singapore? In Europe, the rapid advance of the Red Army and the success of communist resistance movements throughout occupied Europe threatened a Soviet domination of the continent that spelled new dangers to British imperial security. Churchill talked of a 'showdown', but he was haunted by visions of another war.

Beyond the pressure of the impending invasion of France and the subsequent fighting, therefore, ranged fears that would not be alleviated even by military victory. Simultaneously, pressure from Labour ministers forced the government to focus on reconstruction planning, with the publication of a series of white papers on a national health service, employment policy and social insurance, and the passing of acts to reform education, and town and country planning. Touching on property rights, the latter sparked testy exchanges between Labour and Conservative MPs and threatened ministerial resignations. Both parties were looking forward to a return to business as usual: fighting one another at a general election.

Simultaneously, the emotional tempo of the war escalated. On the British home front, higher military losses after the Normandy invasion and German V-weapon attacks led to growing fury at Germans, who would not give up even though the war was lost. "Feeling v much 'let them have it'," observed one woman – evacuated with her young daughter from London during the V1 offensive – of the forthcoming Allied advance into Germany. "We have had to stand a lot on account of bad leaders + why should they escape for the same mistake."

Victory plans unravel

Reconstruction would depend on a swift reorientation of the British economy. To maximise US aid, in 1941 London had pledged that no Lend-Lease material would be used to manufacture British exports. Now, the British hoped to persuade the Americans to keep up supplies during 'Stage II', and allow them to be used in civilian export manufacturing. They saw it as fair recompense for the sacrifices made before the US's entry into the war. But such appeals to fairness had little influence in Washington. Rather, it was Britain's future usefulness that swayed Roosevelt.

With his presidential re-election campaign gathering pace, Roosevelt was balancing his desire to establish the international mechanisms to underpin an American global order with his determination to avoid any entanglement in the mess of postwar Europe. Two conferences in the summer of

Final offensive Troops pour ashore on D-Day, 6 June 1944. Despite initial successes, the Allied assault on Normandy quickly slowed

1944 were meant to lay the groundwork. At Bretton Woods in July, the British accepted US plans for a new dollar-based system to stabilise the global economy. At Dumbarton Oaks from August, the Americans, helped by the British, tried to set up the postwar United Nations. The Soviets, wary of a stitch-up, blocked them. Alongside Soviet moves to install a communist government in postwar Poland, this did not discourage Roosevelt, but it did sensitise him to Britain's role as a counterbalance in Europe.

When the president and prime minister met in Quebec in September 1944, Roosevelt therefore addressed Britain's postwar problems. Churchill offered British participation in the onslaught against Japan and accepted the secret plan drawn up by Roosevelt's Treasury secretary, Henry Morgenthau Jr, to deindustrialise defeated Germany. Morgenthau, who had returned from a visit to the UK convinced that "England really is broke", hoped to pacify the Germans, placate the Soviets and assist the British to revive exports by picking up their former enemy's iron and steel markets. Morgenthau's plan was economically illiterate. Churchill suspected it was too harsh to be popular. But after Morgenthau asked him how he'd "prevent Britain starving when her exports had fallen so low that she would be unable to pay for her imports", he went along with the plan.

Churchill asked Roosevelt if he would have to beg like Fala, the president's dog

Not coincidentally, Roosevelt then agreed that Britain could have the $7bn dollars of Lend-Lease aid it wanted to allow economic reconstruction during Stage II. At a subsequent meeting at Roosevelt's home in Hyde Park, New York, he and Churchill agreed that the atomic bomb, then in development, would remain exclusively Anglo-American rather than subjected to international control. Informed that the bomb would be ready in a year, they agreed it might be used against Japan. Both still thought of it as a very large explosive device, not a weapon so powerful that it would change the world.

Yielding so much was humiliating for Churchill (he asked Roosevelt if he would have to beg like Fala, the president's dog). Since Roosevelt made it plain he intended US forces to leave for home as quickly as possible, Churchill went next to Moscow, where he settled a spheres of influence agreement with Stalin that would safeguard British interests in western and southern Europe.

All the while, the plans for a quick victory in Europe were beginning to unravel. Even while the Quebec meeting went on, the long Allied pursuits out of the Normandy beachhead and into Poland ran out of steam. It would take another round of bombing and battles before they could crack open the Reich. Meanwhile Morgenthau's plan leaked, outrage ensued, and Roosevelt backed away from the agreements made at Quebec.

British interventions against communist insurgents in Belgium and Greece scandalised opinion in the US and infuriated Labour party members. The German counteroffensive in the Ardennes exacerbated Anglo-American differences, to the joy of increasingly nationalist newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic.

After the western Allies crossed the Rhine in March 1945, the British found themselves sidelined as the Americans drove to cut off the Nazis they mistakenly thought would be escaping for a last-ditch defence in the mountains to the south. The unintentional

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Bitter end General Alfred Jodl, the German chief of staff, signs an unconditional surrender to the Allies in Reims, France on 7 May 1945

Enter left New prime minister Clement Attlee (left) travels to the Potsdam Conference in 1945 to negotiate the postwar peace settlement

side effect of this was to leave British forces, under Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, to take the surrender of those German troops still in the field on 4 May 1945.

At his last conference, at Yalta in February 1945, Roosevelt had secured Soviet participation in the United Nations but demands for democracy for Soviet-occupied Poland were never realised. Only when Stalin threatened the sanctity of the UN did Roosevelt oppose the Soviet leader. But not for long. The president's health had been worsening for a year. On 12 April 1945, he died.

Payment problems

The new president, Harry Truman, was more forthright with the Soviets but even less likely than the slippery Roosevelt to offer succour to the UK. The aid promised for Stage II – still expected to go on until the end of 1946 – was steadily reduced as Lend-Lease administrators treated British requests more stringently, releasing only militarily essential supplies. With Stage II begun, Stage III – the period after Japan's defeat – loomed ominously. Lend-Lease would then stop and the British, reliant on overseas supplies, would be left with a balance of payments deficit of $8bn. This was plainly a major problem, but no serious work was done on it for months after May 1945, because no sooner was Germany defeated than ministers drove each other into a general election.

While the votes were being counted, the final tripartite conference of the war took place at Potsdam in Germany. In the midst of discussions, news reached Truman and Churchill of the Alamogordo test, which revealed the tremendous power of the atomic bomb. Shortly afterwards, Churchill returned to London for the announcement of the election result. Much to everyone's surprise, Labour had won a landslide and would form its first majority government. Clement Attlee, the new Labour prime minister, returned to Potsdam in Churchill's place. Truman swiftly wrapped things up – he wanted to be in Washington when the first atomic bomb was dropped on Japan.

The destruction wreaked by the bombs, together with the damage already done by the US bombing and blockade, and the declaration of hostilities by the Soviet Union, forced Japan out of the war on 15 August 1945. Stage II was over, and five days later Truman announced the end of Lend-Lease.

The new British government was not well prepared for the crises that would follow, including the negotiation of an American loan and the rapid expenditure on overseas military effort as dollar prices soared and Britain grappled with garrisoning defeated Germany and a collapse of imperial control. In the summer of 1947, a run on the newly convertible pound would catch London just as much by surprise as the sudden ending of Lend-Lease.

The reactiveness of policy-making in the face of these crises, however, was rooted not in the failure of any individual or political party, but in the uncertainties of timing that had made it so hard to prepare for the end of the war. Rather than thinking of the post-1945 settlement in terms of a welfare state delivered as a reward for wartime sacrifice, we should see it as a product of these years of confusion. H

Stage III loomed ominously: Britain would be left with a deficit of £8bn

Daniel Todman is professor of modern history at Queen Mary, University of London. His latest book, *Britain's War: A New World, 1942 1947*, was published by Allen Lane in March

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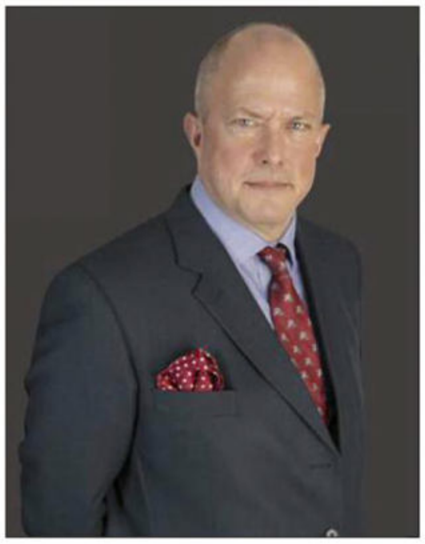

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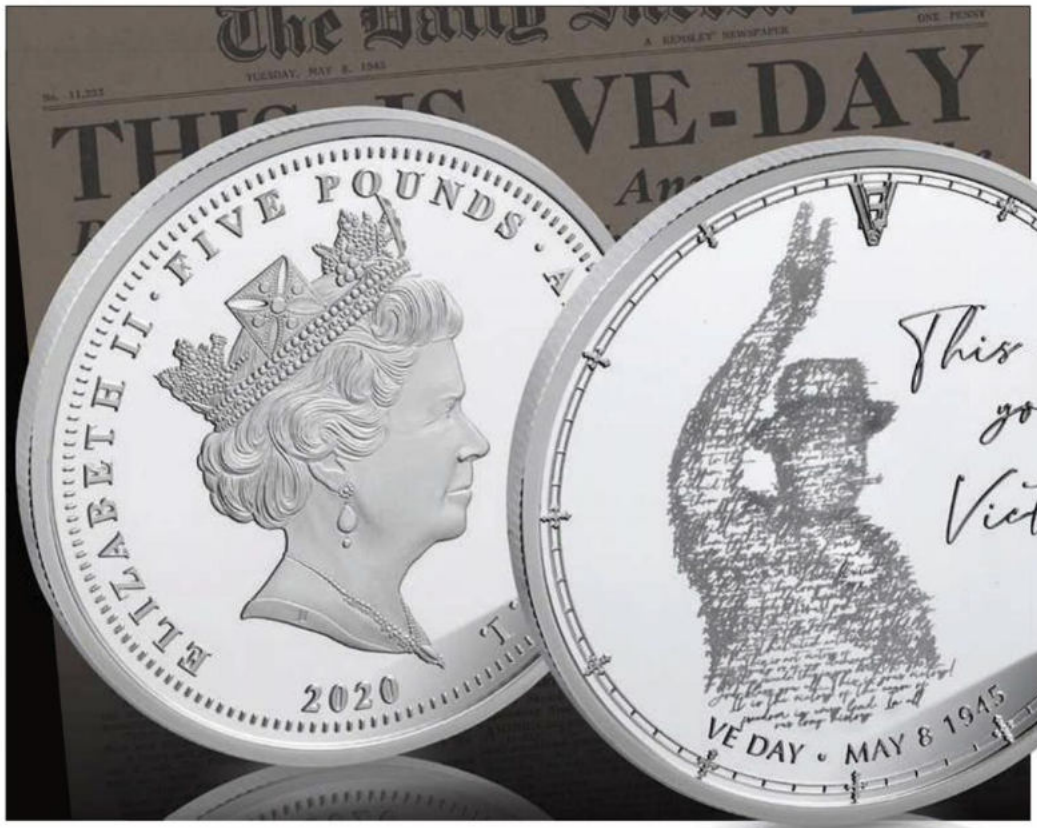

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The inspiration behind the VE Day 75th Anniversary £5 Coin: May 8, 1945, Churchill waves to the crowds in Whitehall, on the day he broadcast to the nation that the war with Germany had been won "This is your Victory" he tells the nation.

VE Day 75 years on

This year, on May 8, a special programme of events will take place across the United Kingdom to commemorate Allied Victory in Europe and pay tribute to the Second World War generation who served at home and overseas.

Over the bank holiday weekend, as we remember the heroes of the Second World War, Winston Churchill's victory speech will once again resound across the country just as it did 75 years ago. It is scheduled to be rebroadcast in public spaces as part of the VE Day 75th anniversary commemorations. The new £5 Coin issued to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day fittingly depicts Churchill in his own words, taken from that victory speech.

However we choose to mark the occasion, this year's anniversary is a poignant and possibly final opportunity for the nation to give thanks to all those who contributed to a defining moment in history.

Churchill £5 Coin issued to mark 75 years since VE Day

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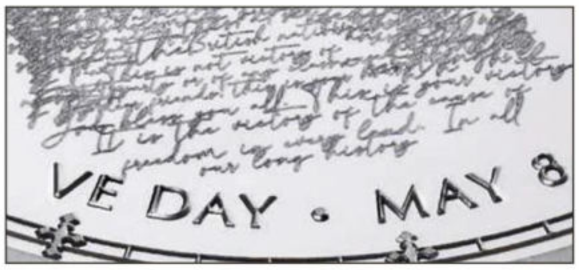
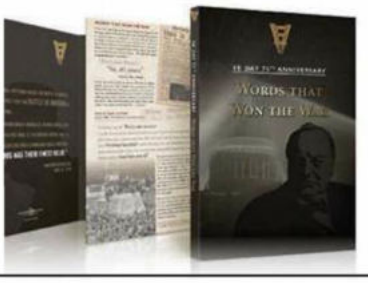


THE WORDS FROM CHURCHILL'S VE DAY SPEECH INGENIOUSLY MAKE UP HIS PORTRAIT



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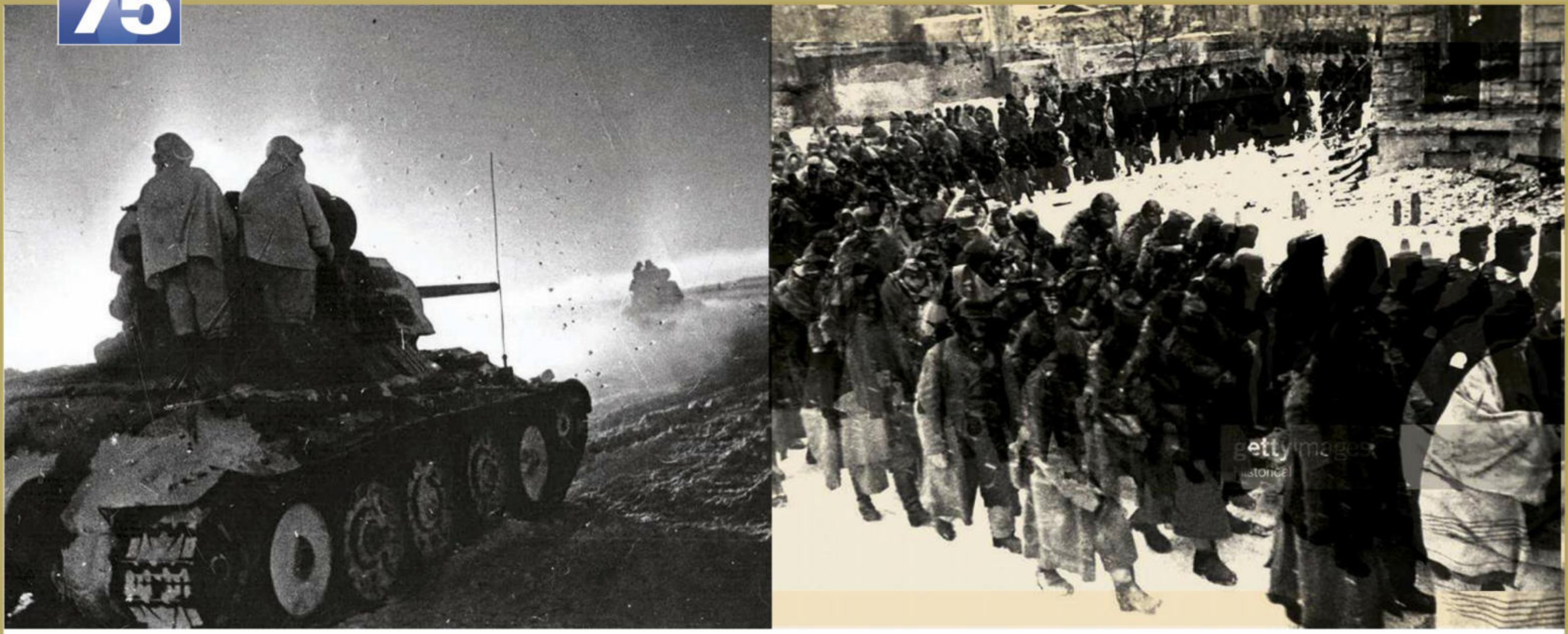

Why did the Allies win in Europe?

Was the decisive factor Hitler's meddling, Allied maritime superiority or the codebreaking experts of Bletchley Park? **Eight leading military historians** try to pinpoint the definitive reason why the Axis powers' grand plans ended in defeat

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Russian T-34 tanks move into battle in 1942; German troops march into captivity following their defeat in the battle of Stalingrad, 1943; one of the code-breaking machines at Bletchley Park, Buckinghamshire; an Atlantic convoy sets out at dawn under the protection of barrage balloons and escort ships

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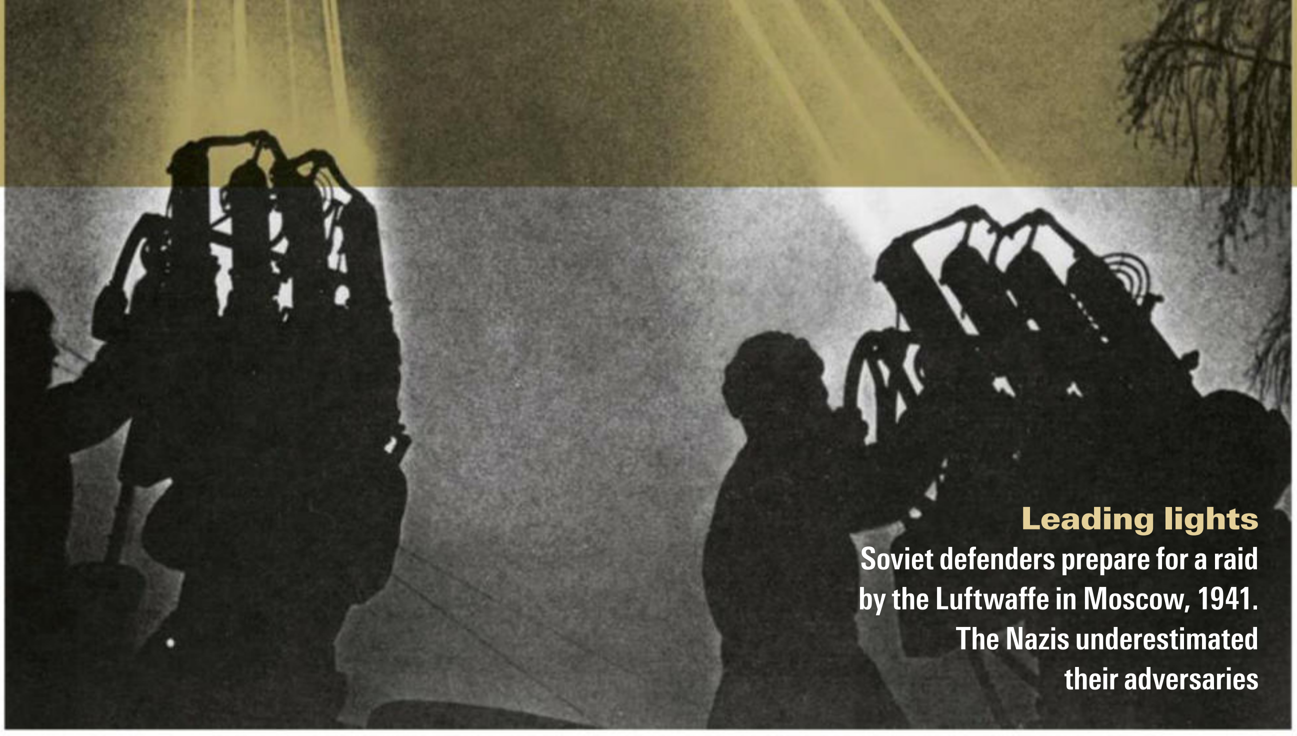
Leading lights Soviet defenders prepare for a raid by the Luftwaffe in Moscow, 1941. The Nazis underestimated their adversaries

1. THE NAZIS' OVERCONFIDENCE

BY **BEN SHEPHERD**

Western Allied industrial, maritime and air power were fundamental to destroying the German war machine. But to win, it was crucial to take ground and destroy the forces holding it, and on this score, it was the eastern front where the Wehrmacht was broken most emphatically.

For me, it was Hitler and his generals' underestimation of the Red Army, coupled with their ideology-suffused faith in their own superiority, that were most decisive to German defeat. Not all commanders succumbed to this mindset during the run-up to the invasion of the Soviet Union, but many did. Their military intelligence substituted hard facts about the Red Army with arrogant, racially coloured assumptions of chaos and incompetence. All of this blinded them to the Red Army's true strength, and to the perilously uneven state of their own forces.

The Red Army's initially calamitous response to the invasion looked set to prove the Germans right. But the German advance took increasingly grievous losses to Soviet resistance, and its mobility was progressively eviscerated by the country's immense distances, harsh environment and often ramshackle transport infrastructure. By the time the Germans reached the gates of Moscow in December 1941, the blitzkrieg was already exhausted, and with it expired their one chance of decisive victory.

Over the following 18 months, the Wehrmacht strove repeatedly to regain the initiative – most famously at Stalingrad – but failed to do so to any decisive extent. All the while, the Red Army's own fighting power burgeoned on all counts. It was fuelled by immense if brutally executed feats of Soviet industrial production, and increasingly by vast economic aid from the United States. Following further German failure at Kursk in July 1943, the Red Army pressed forward inexorably, and the Wehrmacht was never again able even to attempt to claw back the advantage.

Ben Shepherd is reader in history at Glasgow Caledonian University and the author of *Hitler's Soldiers: The German Army in the Third Reich* (Yale, 2016)

Sinking feeling The advancing Wehrmacht troops pull a pack animal from the Russian mud, c1941. By invading the Soviet Union, argues Sir Max Hastings, Germany bit off more than it could chew

2. THE INVASION OF THE SOVIET UNION

BY **MAX HASTINGS**

Hitler's June 1941 advance into the USSR – known as Operation Barbarossa – was the decisive moment of the war, because thereafter, at unspeakable human cost, the Red Army did the heavy lifting: first to contain the Germans, and finally to defeat them. It may be argued that American supplies – everything from aluminium to spam, boots, trucks and telephone cable – made an important contribution to Soviet victory, but in the crucial first 18 months of the eastern war, western materiel reached the USSR in modest quantities, making only a marginal contribution to the Soviet war effort until 1943, by which time the battle of Stalingrad had been fought and won.

As the great historian Sir Michael Howard often said, counter-factuals are foolish, because once one variable changes, infinite possibilities are opened up. But I have always thought that if Hitler, instead of launching Barbarossa, had reinforced Rommel and completed the conquest of the Mediterranean and Middle East, as I believe he could have

BRIDGEMAN/GETTY IMAGES

Show of force

Allied tanks board landing craft in Tunisia in July 1943, two days before the invasion of Sicily. In four years, US and British land, air and sea strength had grown exponentially

done, Churchill's government would not have survived. It might well have been replaced by a Tory administration that sought a compromise peace with Germany. After the experience of the First World War, I don't think the British people (any more than the French) had the stomach for the ghastly struggle of attrition that proved necessary on the eastern front before the Germans were driven back. It is unlikely there was ever any easy route to winning the Second World War, or has been in any great clash between more or less evenly matched modern industrial powers.

I suppose a scenario can be pondered wherein the western Allies dallied until an atomic bomb was built, then used it against Germany. But that presupposes US entry into the war, and indeed many other things. I rest my case that an enormous amount of killing and dying had to happen before the Nazis were crushed, and though it did not seem so to the western Allies and their peoples at the time, posterity can see that the Soviets did most of it.

……

Sir Max Hastings is an author and journalist, whose books include *Chastise: The Dambusters Story 1943* (William Collins, 2019)

ALAMY

3. ALLIED OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

BY **JAMES HOLLAND**

Historians tend to view the Second World War predominantly through the prism of strategic decisions and fighting at the coalface, when an arguably more important consideration is how combatant nations marshal their resources. I've recently been looking at a photograph of tanks being loaded onto landing ships before the Allied invasion of Sicily in July 1943 (above). It suggests exactly what it is: a demonstration of immense materiel power and wealth. What is so astonishing is that, at the start of the war, neither Britain nor the United States had much of an army and both had comparatively small air forces – very small in the case of the US. Yet in four years, they had grown exponentially and were fighting equally in the air, on land and at sea, on a truly global scale. They were also providing materiel support to the Soviet Union.

That the United States became the arsenal of democracy is reasonably well known, but the speed with which it achieved this is less understood. Nor is it much known that Britain's military growth was also extremely impressive – to the tune of 132,500 aircraft, for example, and providing 31 per cent of all supplies to the US in the European theatre of operations. Lend-Lease cut both ways.

Key to this was prioritisation, which was dictated by a very clear goal or endgame, and brought research, development and production into very sharp focus. In contrast, both Germany and Japan were, after initial gains, caught in a production spiral from which they simply could not recover. Food and fuel were their biggest shortages, but materiel failure ran across the board. Japan didn't sink the aircraft carriers at Pearl Harbor, and Germany didn't win the Battle of Britain; while Britain and the US were still fighting, their materiel power – their 'big war' strategy – meant victory was assured.

……

James Holland is a historian and author. He is currently working on a new book about the 1943 Sicily campaign

Food, materiel and fuel shortages for the Axis powers ran across the board

4. HITLER'S MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

BY **MARY KATHRYN BARBIER**

The single greatest factor in the Allied victory over Nazi Germany and its allies in Europe was the role that Adolf Hitler played in determining the offensives launched by the German military. On multiple occasions, Hitler's decision-making was flawed. While a political leader generally has an impact on his or her nation's military engagements, Hitler frequently ignored the recommendations of his advisors, and ordered major operations that ultimately had enormous consequences and affected Germany's ability to achieve final victory.

Hitler gave the green light to the invasion of the USSR on 20 June 1941, and the German invasion commenced two days later. Despite initial successes all along the front, the operation ground to a halt within months. Instead of easily defeating the Soviets, as predicted, the Germans woke a sleeping bear that refused to be budged from either Moscow or Stalingrad. Thousands of German soldiers surrendered or died while fighting in Moscow, Leningrad and Stalingrad. Like a meat grinder, the war in the east consumed millions of men. On 11 December 1941 – three days after he announced the end of the winter campaign – Hitler joined Mussolini in declaring war on the United States even though the Soviet Union had not yet been defeated

In the spring of 1943, despite the Wehrmacht's crushing loss at Stalingrad, Hitler was still planning for Germany's triumph. He authorised Operation Citadel, an attack against the Kursk salient that was one of the last major offensives on the eastern front, and which proved to be an unmitigated disaster. Following the Wehrmacht's defeat in that battle, Soviet military forces

Hitler studies a map of the Soviet invasion, 1941. The führer's meddling proved a key disadvantage

Hitler frequently ignored advice and launched major operations

Quantity over quality
T-34 tanks and Red Army infantry attack German positions on the eastern front. The USSR was able to produce the model in vast numbers

5. THE T-34 TANK

BY **ANDREW ROBERTS**

Between 1941 and 1945, the Soviet Union produced 58,681 T-34 tanks. They were not the most powerful tanks in terms of firepower, nor the fastest, but their vast numbers along the entire front began a steady push west towards Germany. By the summer of 1944, increasingly pressed by the western Allies, German forces faced challengers in Italy, France, Belgium and the Netherlands. Not willing to throw in the towel, Hitler authorised the Reich's final counteroffensive in the west, Operation Autumn Mist – known as the battle of the Bulge – which also ended in defeat, and was the final nail in the coffin. Germany no longer had the chance of a victorious outcome. Although the Soviet, British, American and Canadian armies together defeated Germany, Hitler's flawed decision-making played a significant role in the Allied victory in Europe.

Mary Kathryn Barbier is professor of history at Mississippi State University and the author of *Spies, Lies, and Citizenship: The Hunt for Nazi Criminals in America and Abroad* (Potomac Books, 2017)

won battle after battle for the Red Army, which is what ultimately destroyed Nazi Germany. "In the end," Stalin is reputed to have said of the T-34, "quantity becomes quality." Although the German Panzers were superior individually to the T-34, they could not overcome the odds of three or four or sometimes five to one that the Soviets were capable of deploying in key battles such as Kursk in July–August 1943.

A central statistic for the Second World War is that, for every five Germans killed in combat – not, therefore, including civilians killed in cities in the Allies' Combined Bomber Offensive – four died on the eastern front. While we in the west understandably concentrate on events like D-Day, Arnhem and the battle of the Bulge, much larger campaigns were being fought in the east, allowing the Red Army to advance on Berlin, forcing Hitler to kill himself. For example, in Operation Bagration in Byelorussia from June to August 1944, some 450,000 casualties were inflicted on Germany's Army Group Centre. That is why the T-34 (which includes two main variants, the T-34/76 and T-34/85) was the most decisive factor in destroying nazism.

Andrew Roberts is a military historian whose most recent book is *Leadership in War* (Allen Lane, 2019)

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6. THE CODEBREAKERS OF BLETCHLEY PARK

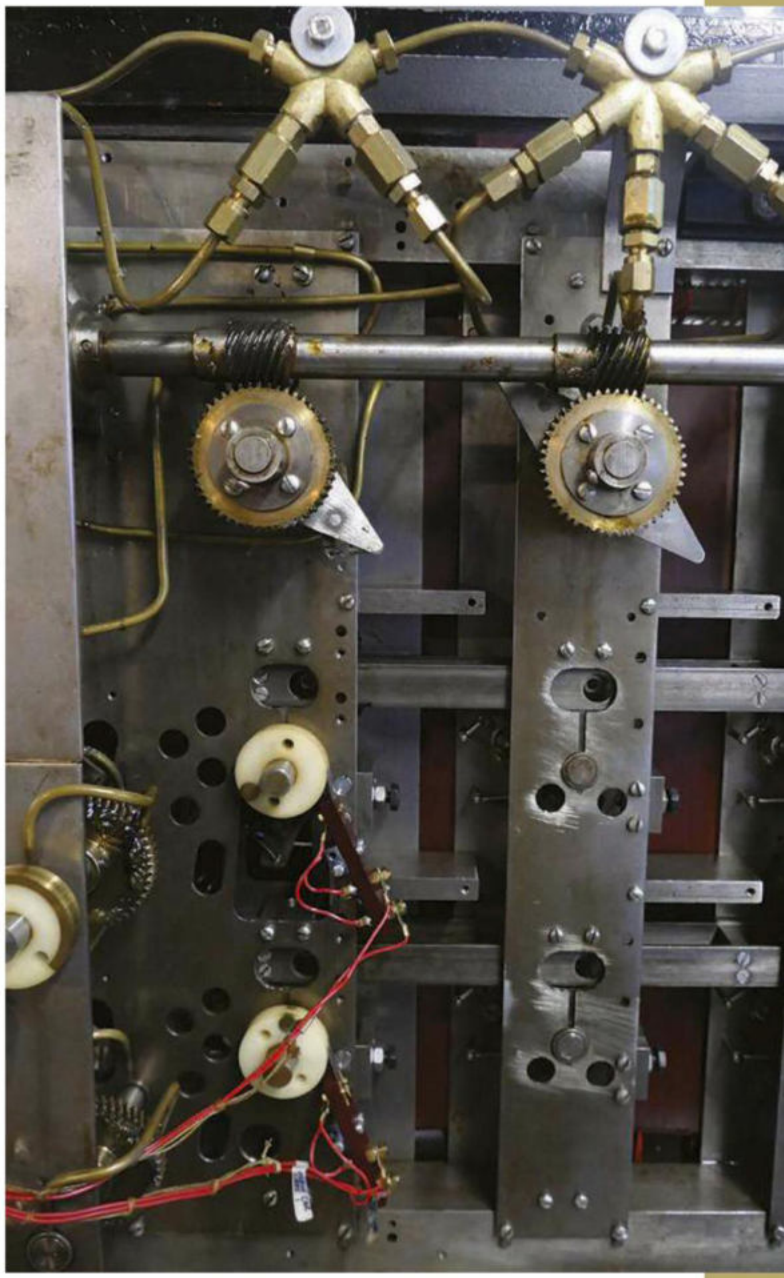
BY **PETER CADDICK-ADAMS**

As soon as their homeland was invaded in September 1939, several Polish mathematicians escaped to the west with the secrets of the German 'Enigma' encryption device. This scrambled all 26 letters of the alphabet to a pre-set key that changed every 24 hours. From the May 1940 invasion of France onwards, German reports – essentially transmitted in Enigma gibberish – were intercepted over the air and forwarded by outstations to Bletchley Park, near Milton Keynes in Buckinghamshire, which housed the UK Government Code and Cypher School and the intelligence programme known as 'Ultra'.

Several brilliant minds at Bletchley helped devise 'bombes': electromechanical devices designed to discover the daily settings of Enigma machines. From March 1940, these increased the pace that German messages could be deciphered, translated into English and assessed for their military importance. Understanding Enigma traffic contributed to victory in the Battle of Britain, assessing the German threats to invade England, and was especially important during the battle of the Atlantic, on which British survival depended in 1941–42.

Enigma provided tactical intelligence of mostly short-term value. More long-term insights into the German military mind were gleaned from mid-1941, when senior commanders started transmitting coded orders to one another using the 'Lorenz' wireless teleprinter, whose traffic was nicknamed 'Tunny'. This gave access to strategic intentions and was initially deciphered by brainpower alone, until the creation of 'Colossus', the world's first programmable digital electronic computer, which commenced operations in February 1944.

It is challenging to measure the precise value of the work done at Bletchley, where Italian and Japanese traffic was also broken. We do know that on 12 July 1945, US general and future president Dwight D Eisenhower wrote a secret letter to thank Sir Stewart Menzies, who had kept both Churchill and Eisenhower supplied with daily Ultra material. In it, he stated: "The intelligence which has emanated from you before and during this campaign has been of priceless value to me… It has saved thousands of British and American lives, and in no small way contributed to the speed with which the enemy was routed and eventually forced to surrender."



Intelligent design

An electromechanical device called a bombe, devised by British cryptologists at Bletchley Park to decode German Enigma messages. General Eisenhower called the Ultra intelligence "priceless"

This was reinforced by Sir Harry Hinsley, a former Bletchley man and later author of the official volumes on British Intelligence in the Second World War. He stated that, without Ultra, "the war would have been something like two years longer, perhaps three years longer, possibly four years longer than it was".

Peter Caddick-Adams is a military historian whose latest book is *Sand and Steel: A New History of D-Day* (Arrow, 2020)

An American soldier holds German prisoners at gunpoint during the battle of the Bulge, 1944

7. THE ALLIES RULED THE WAVES

BY **NICK HEWITT**

Fundamentally, Allied sea power ensured Nazi Germany's defeat. During the dark days of 1940 and 1941, Allied warships and other craft saved a succession of armies from certain destruction, evacuating them first from Norway, then famously from France via Dunkirk, and finally from Greece and Crete, despite relentless enemy attempts to prevent them. After France fell, it was the Royal Navy that saved Great Britain from invasion.

Warships protected convoys of merchant ships, carrying vital supplies from the United States, Canada and worldwide, in the face of determined Axis attempts to interdict them. This kept first Britain and then the Soviet Union in the fight. After the US entered the war in December 1941, sea power guaranteed the build-up of the overwhelming American military and air power required to take the fight back onto the continent.

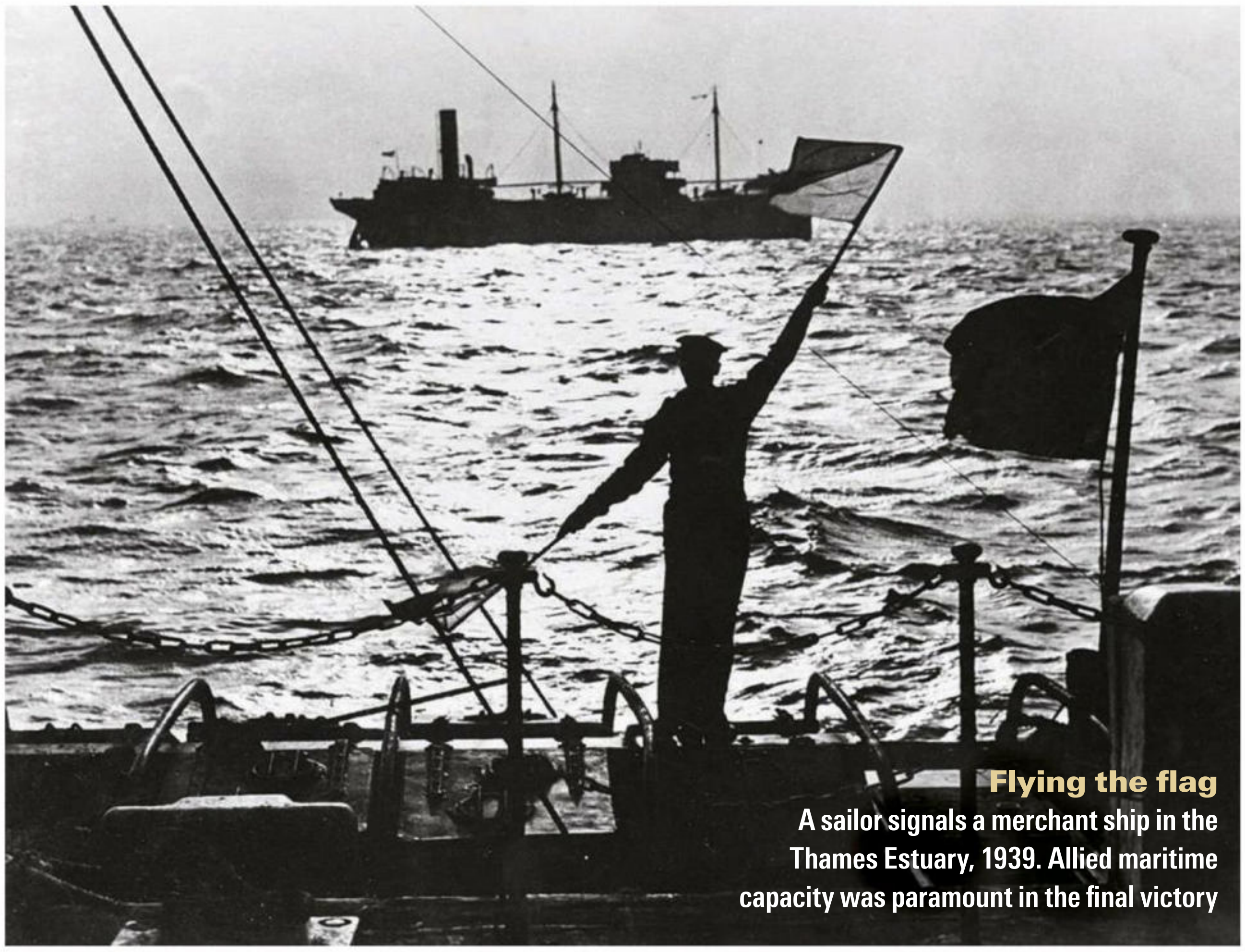
Sea power kept British Commonwealth armies fighting in north Africa, despite devastating enemy attacks in the Mediterranean and perilously long supply routes around the Cape of Good Hope. Later, it gave the Allies the flexibility to move armies around the world, seizing the initiative and hitting their enemies where they were most vulnerable, from Madagascar, Morocco and Algeria to Sicily and southern Italy. For the western Allies, the Second World War was largely a naval war, fought with expeditionary armies.

Finally, it was overwhelming Allied sea power – a staggering 7,000 ships and vessels of all sizes – that put a vast Allied army ashore in Normandy on 6 June 1944, reinforced it with thousands of troops and vehicles every day, sustained it with food, petrol and ammunition, and provided everything it needed, from floating artillery support to workshops and headquarters.

D-Day forced Nazi Germany into a two-front war it could never win. It was the final, decisive triumph of Allied sea power, and brought the war in Europe to an end.

An overwhelming 7,000 vessels put a vast Allied army ashore in Normandy

Nick Hewitt is head of collections and research at the National Museum of the Royal Navy, and the author of several works of naval history



Flying the flag
A sailor signals a merchant ship in the Thames Estuary, 1939. Allied maritime capacity was paramount in the final victory

8. THE NAZIS WERE THE UNDERDOGS

BY **EVAN MAWDSLEY**

Fundamentally, the European Axis – and Japan – lost because they were much weaker than the Allied coalition. The Second World War was fought between the haves and have-nots, between established powers and 'revisionist' ones. To the Axis leaders, world resources – both overseas and in territories within Eurasia – had been divided up unfairly and without their participation, in the 1919 Treaty of Versailles and before. To quote the Axis Tripartite Pact of September 1940, it is "a prerequisite of a lasting peace that each nation of the world receive the space to which it is entitled". They lacked these resources in 1939, and Germany faced the additional problem that the treaty had restricted its armed forces until the mid-1930s.

There is no space to discuss Italy or the smaller Axis satellites; they too had a sense of entitlement, but could never have won without Germany. Hitler believed he could deal with the established powers by knocking them out one by one, and at the same time consolidate a blockade-proof resource base deep in Eurasia. Related to this was the Prussian-German military tradition, which counted on better-led armed forces winning quick victories in 'wars of movement' rather than protracted wars of attrition. This failed: by late 1941 Hitler faced a situation where he could not invade Britain nor control more than the deep borderlands of the USSR. As Hitler put it in his 'Testament', written in a besieged Berlin in the war's endgame: "The tragedy of the Germans is that we never have enough time." Historically the Axis powers were late-comers, trying to catch up from a position of weakness. Because they were weak, they failed. H

Evan Mawdsley is honorary professorial research fellow at the University of Glasgow and the author of *The War for the Seas: A Maritime History of World War II* (Yale, 2019)

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Bird's eye view
An old woman with a 'fortune-telling' parakeet in 1920s London. Those who questioned science and reason in postwar Britain were "tuning into an important popular zeitgeist"

Sorrow, spiritualism and the **birth of strange England**

How do you make sense of a world shattered by conflict? For many Britons in the wake of the First World War, writes **David Nash**, the answer lay in rejecting rationality and instead searching for meaning in the realms of the dead

BRIDGEMAN

It was November 1918 and the First World War was over. As soldiers put down their weapons and peace broke out across Europe, Britons breathed a sigh of relief and contemplated the future. But the question weighing heavily on many people's minds was, what should that future look like?

Some fervently sought a return to normality – to the comforting certainties of the prewar world. But others exhibited a starkly different outlook. They reasoned that it was those comforting certainties, the very institutions that had dominated Britain in the countdown to 1914, that had led the country into a catastrophic conflict. Their reaction to the horrors of the war was to reject rationality in favour of something altogether stranger, something that encompassed witchcraft, spiritual renewal and communication with the dead.

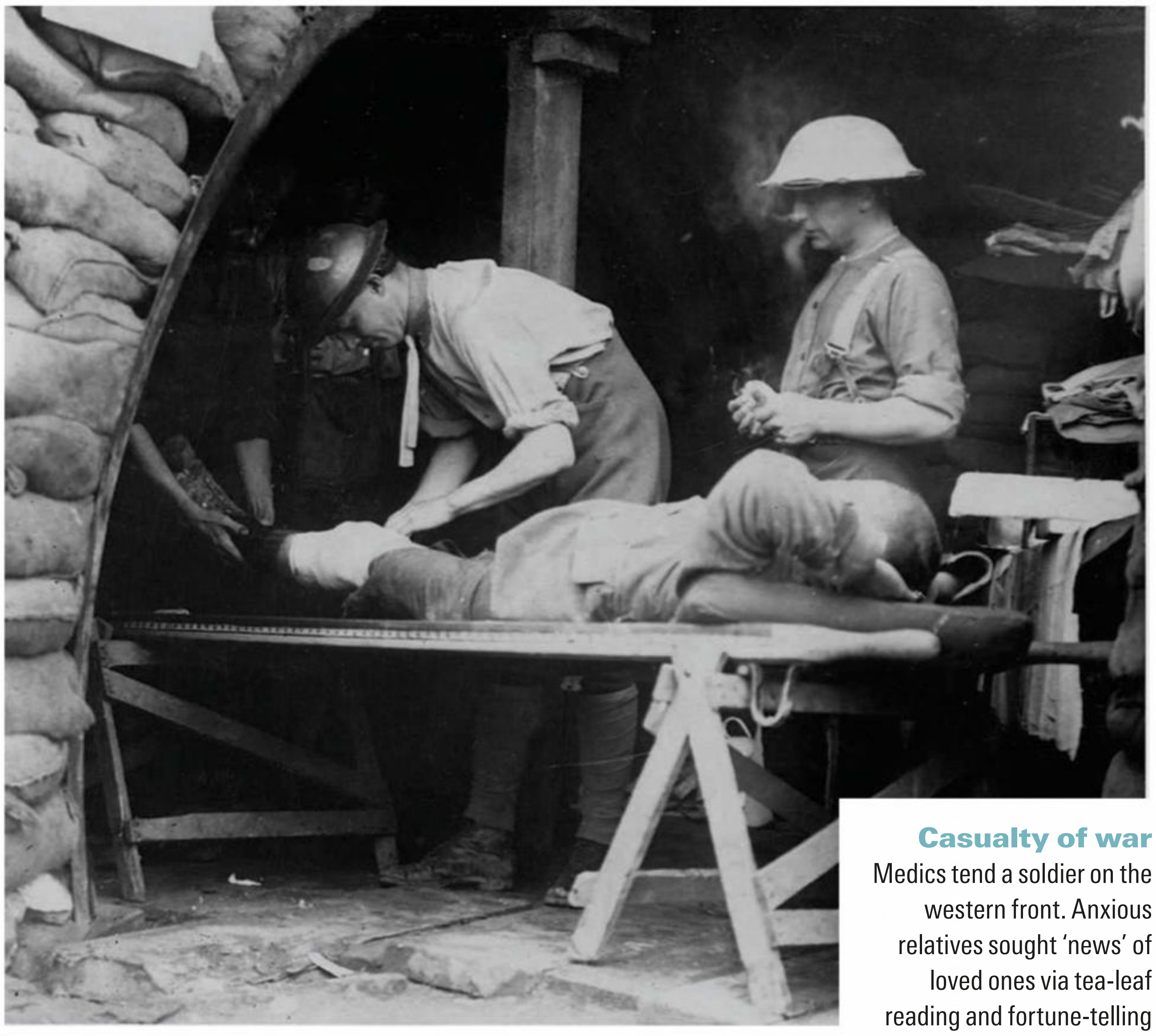
Spirits of the fallen

Britons had been drawn to 'irrational' ideas and practices in growing numbers long before the Armistice of 11 November 1918. Interest in spiritualism surged dramatically in 1917, as the nation endured a third full year of conflict. In fact, at one point, this religious movement – which promised believers the prospect of being able to communicate with the dead – briefly threatened to become more popular than the Anglican church.

At the heart of spiritualism's mass appeal was its offer of individually tailored solace to bereaved parents who could not be reunited with their fallen sons – soldiers whom the War Office had decreed were to stay buried together on the continent. No one captured this thirst for comfort better than the physicist Oliver Lodge, whose bestselling book, *Raymond*, communicated the joy the author felt on contacting his own dead son.

The benign spirit of Second Lieutenant Raymond Lodge – who had been killed in the Ypres Salient in autumn 1915 – described helping newly deceased soldiers "reach the other side", and promised his mother that he would occupy a vacant chair set specially for him at the Christmas dinner table. But he added: "There must be no sadness. I don't want to be a ghost at the feast." Raymond also told of the safe and comfortable beyond, and carefully explained that spirits were working tirelessly to ensure the course of world events would benefit civilisation from now onwards.

The emotional trauma that fed the rise of spiritualism also spawned a surge in interest in fortune-telling and tea-leaf reading – both of which offered worried relatives 'news' of loved ones potentially in peril. But by the time the guns fell silent, these more traditional means of seeing the future and contacting the dead were being overshadowed by the theories expounded by Frederick Bligh Bond, William Packenham-Walsh and Margaret Murray – three figures whose teachings on the relationship between the living and the dead chimed perfectly with Britons' growing scepticism of logic and science.



Casualty of war
Medics tend a soldier on the western front. Anxious relatives sought 'news' of loved ones via tea-leaf reading and fortune-telling

Oliver Lodge's bestselling book, *Raymond*, described the joy the author felt on contacting his son, who had been killed at Ypres in 1915

Frederick Bligh Bond was a former chief archaeologist at Glastonbury Abbey, who in 1918 began offering startling revelations that he believed would transform Britain. In his book *The Gate of Remembrance*, Bligh Bond explained that his successful excavations over the previous decade had been guided by spirit contact with 16th-century monks. These monk-spirits offered Bligh Bond important assistance as part of a great collective consciousness that joined them with the living, what he called 'The Great Memoria'. This consciousness was universal, even including the German enemy. As such, it promised redemption for all races.

Bligh Bond's esoteric ideas might have been scoffed at before the war, but the message that the dead were still linked to the consciousness of the living resonated powerfully with the anxious and the grief-stricken in the dark days of early 1918. And this was reflected in stunning sales: *The Gate of Remembrance* sold out two editions in 1918, a third in 1920 and a fourth in 1921.

Part of the book's allure was its enticing title and seductive cover, which beckoned the living through the 'Gate of Remembrance' into a deeply comforting paradise, where longed-for reunions were certain to occur.

Bligh Bond also called for spiritual renewal, proposing that Glastonbury become "a centre of spiritual realisation and reconciliation between the various racial elements in these islands and their distinctive religious expressions". The book's publisher went as far as to plead in *The Times* that Glastonbury be rebuilt as a lasting spiritual memorial to the war dead.

As if to echo the mood, in 1920 William Kerrich apparently discovered the bones of Joseph of Arimathea – the legendary biblical custodian of the Holy Grail, who supposedly Christianised England – in Glastonbury. Though Kerrich's 'discovery' was eventually dismissed as a fake, its timing betrays a desire to address a raging tide of hope. This

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Glastonbury Abbey, St. Joseph's Chapel.

Life after death
One correspondent to *The Times* argued that Glastonbury Abbey, shown in a c1915 postcard, should be rebuilt as a spiritual memorial to the fallen

was augmented by the vicar of Glastonbury who alleged that he had uncovered proof that St Paul had preached in England. Such romanticism persuaded one reviewer of *The Gate of Remembrance* to praise Bligh Bond for invoking a Glastonbury "wrapped round as by an intense cloud with a cluster of beautiful old legends and traditions".

In touch with the Tudors

But Frederick Bligh Bond wasn't alone in offering traumatised Britons the prospect of a brighter future now that the First World War had ended. In fact, it was a similar cocktail of spiritualism, wishful thinking – and, it could be added, a decidedly shaky relationship with reality – that moved a missionary returning from the far east in 1919 to offer the nation a profound reconciliation with its troubled past. That missionary, Reverend William Packenham-Walsh, was convinced by the idea that Anne Boleyn was speaking earnestly to him from beyond the grave. Today, Packenham-Walsh's claims may appear hopelessly far-fetched. But in the culturally turbulent Britain of 1920–21, large numbers of people were prepared to believe him. Those who had migrated beyond the fringes of rational belief helped his research and joined him at seances.

United in death
Frederick Bligh Bond argued that the living and the dead were united by a great collective consciousness – one that included the German enemy

Packenham-Walsh gathered around him some of the most proficient mediums in the country, supplemented by the Irish spiritualist Hester Dowden, who had apparently interacted with the spirit of Oscar Wilde.

Anne Boleyn, we're told, referred to Packenham-Walsh as "her champion". But she wasn't the only Tudor heavyweight to whom the missionary and his associates claimed to have talked – they also apparently conversed with Queen Elizabeth I, the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas More and Cardinal Wolsey. All wanted the living to to do them a favour: to assist "one who was in darkness". When, during one of their meetings, the mediums were hastily told by a spirit to reconvene in a nearby Tudor garden in Chelsea, Hester Dowden wrote the portentous name "Henry Rex"; it seems that the "one who was in darkness" was none other than King Henry VIII.

Packenham-Walsh was beside himself and vowed to bring to repentance the deeply troubled spirit of the Tudor king, who, he was told, displayed "little of kingly quality". After some pantomime-villain bluster from Henry, in which he suggested that Packenham-Walsh was "…some knave from a tavern

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Skeleton crew
Margaret Murray (second left) pictured with a mummy in 1908. The Egyptologist drew parallels between the experiences of First World War soldiers and the fate of Europe's witches

who is making sport of me because I lie at your mercy", the irascible king was reduced to weeping. Gradually he was reconciled with all his wives and children. Henry was even prepared to "…learn my lesson and strive to win back other souls who have erred in like manner as myself".

But Packenham-Walsh had yet more good news for his followers. Those former rivals Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn were now close friends – further proof that, in the spirit world, all jealousies and enmities had been transcended. The reconciled Henry even lectured Packenham-Walsh's war-scarred country about the lessons it could learn about itself. "Methinks thy boasted civilisation hath no cause to vaunt itself, who didst still send forth thy sons to the slaughter, to a greater bloodshed than ever stained the annals of my reign," the former king declared.

Packenham-Walsh and his followers were delighted with their achievements. They had brought the greatest sinner-king from the realms of despair to light-filled repentance. They had also discovered that the wrongs of history, however distant or apparently irretrievable, may yet be redeemed through intercession with the power of the spirit world. Could this tool be of still more benefit to the rest of postwar civilisation?

The Holy Grail legend

Someone who would have answered this question with a definitive 'yes' was Margaret Murray, an archaeological and anthropological scholar who specialised in Egyptology. Murray turned to voluntary hospital work when the war broke out. But, having exhausted herself at a hospital in France, in 1915 she agreed to be invalided home, choosing to convalesce in Glastonbury.

While recovering, Murray immersed herself in the study of the Holy Grail legend. She had already accepted the ideas of the diffusionists – who believed that all civilisations had emanated from one place (Murray, predictably, believed that this was Egypt) and spread throughout the globe. But Murray now took this theory one step further, arguing that it should be used to enact reconciliation between nations after the intense conflict of the First World War. If she could somehow prove that all cultures had a common heritage, then dialogue, tolerance

They discovered that the wrongs of history, however distant, may yet be redeemed through intercession with the power of the spirit world

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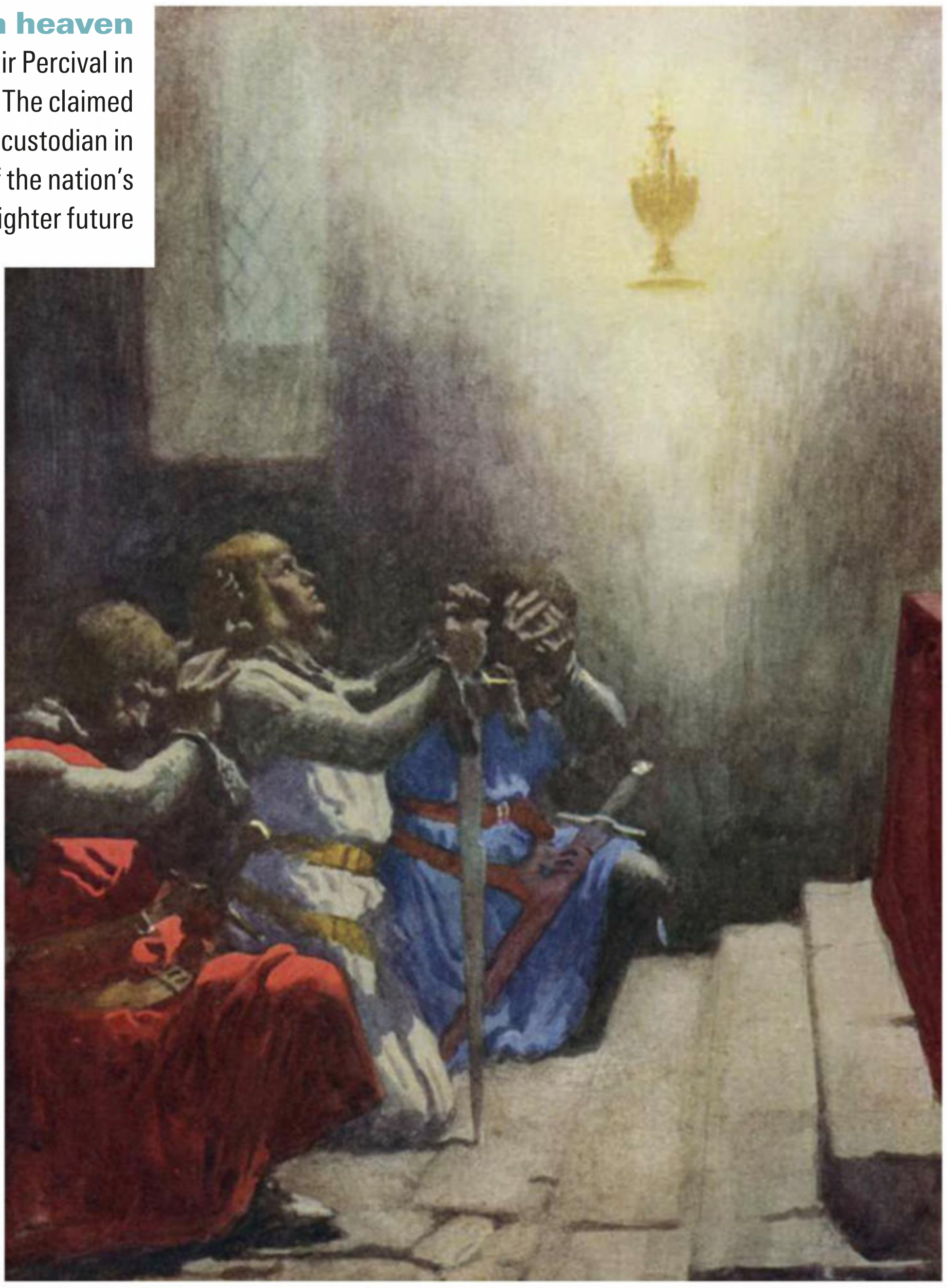

Manna from heaven

The Holy Grail appears to Sir Percival in a screen print from 1918. The claimed discovery of the grail's custodian in 1920 was emblematic of the nation's longing for a brighter future

Death of innocents

A lobby card for the 1916 film *Undine*, based on a fairy tale about an eponymous water spirit. Margaret Murray portrayed witches as unsophisticated and guileless, like those who had been sent to their deaths in the trenches

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and respect would be much easier to forge in the postwar world.

The fruits of these labours appeared in Murray's *Witch-Cult in Western Europe*, the first attempt in the 20th century to write the history of witchcraft. In it, Murray argued that witches were an organised pre-Christian fertility cult which had been widespread across Europe. Her diffusionist logic argued that their practices throughout Europe were identical and they had been a central part of all European cultures. They had been revered until later ruthlessly destroyed by Christianity in the early modern period.

Murray argued her case passionately but her theories could never remotely pass scholarly muster. She falsified evidence and hid contradictory facts, while scholars considered her work on witchcraft a byword for intellectual dishonesty. Not that the population at large cared. Murray's work remained popular enough, for long enough, for her to be asked to compile the Encyclopaedia Britannica entry on the phenomenon – to the great ire of her fellow academics.

Murray's witches had genuine popular appeal for all kinds of reasons. They were spiritually mature but harmless dancing pagans, a pleasing antidote to the ugly crones of Grimms' Germanic fairy tales. In the popular mind, they also represented the bucolic innocent and unsophisticated, who had been callously brought to the slaughter by the powerful and educated – an image that had obvious parallels with the industrialised and mechanised carnage of the western front.

But, most tellingly of all, in the context of the times, Murray's witches "went to the gibbet and the stake, glorifying their god… with a firm belief that death was but the entrance to an eternal life in which they would never be parted from him".

Murray, Bligh Bond and Packenham-Walsh may be largely forgotten today, but there's little doubt that a century ago their ideas had enormous resonance for a nation still coming to terms with one of the most harrowing episodes in its history. All three may have been motivated by guilt – they were non-combatants aged in their fifties – but they were also motivated by a genuine concern to promote renewal, and to reject the ambivalent rational approach to knowledge that, in their opinion, had unleashed the war. As such, they tuned into an important populist zeitgeist. Wartime England had now become strange England as it grappled with the challenges of restoring relationships with both the living and the dead. H

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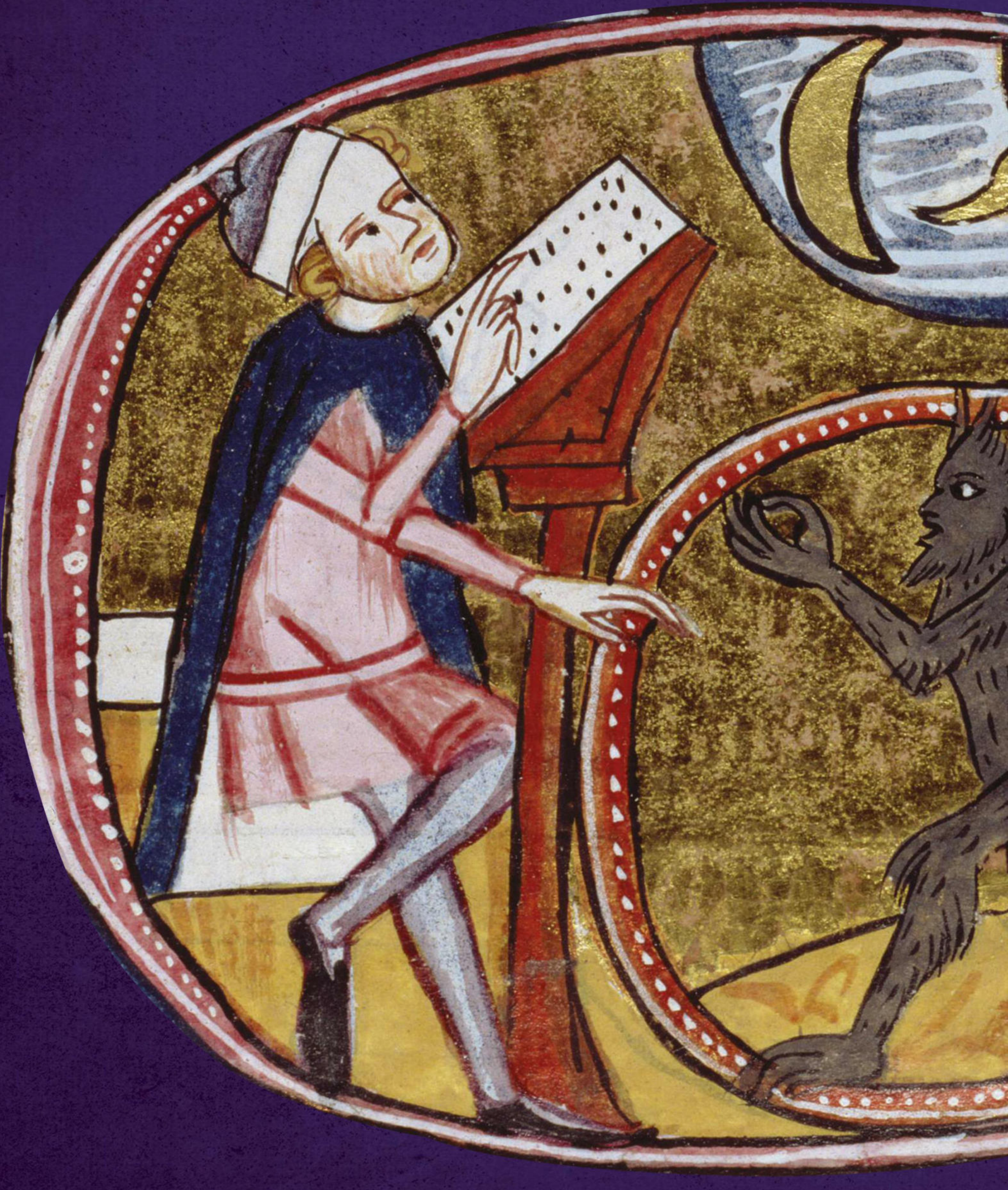
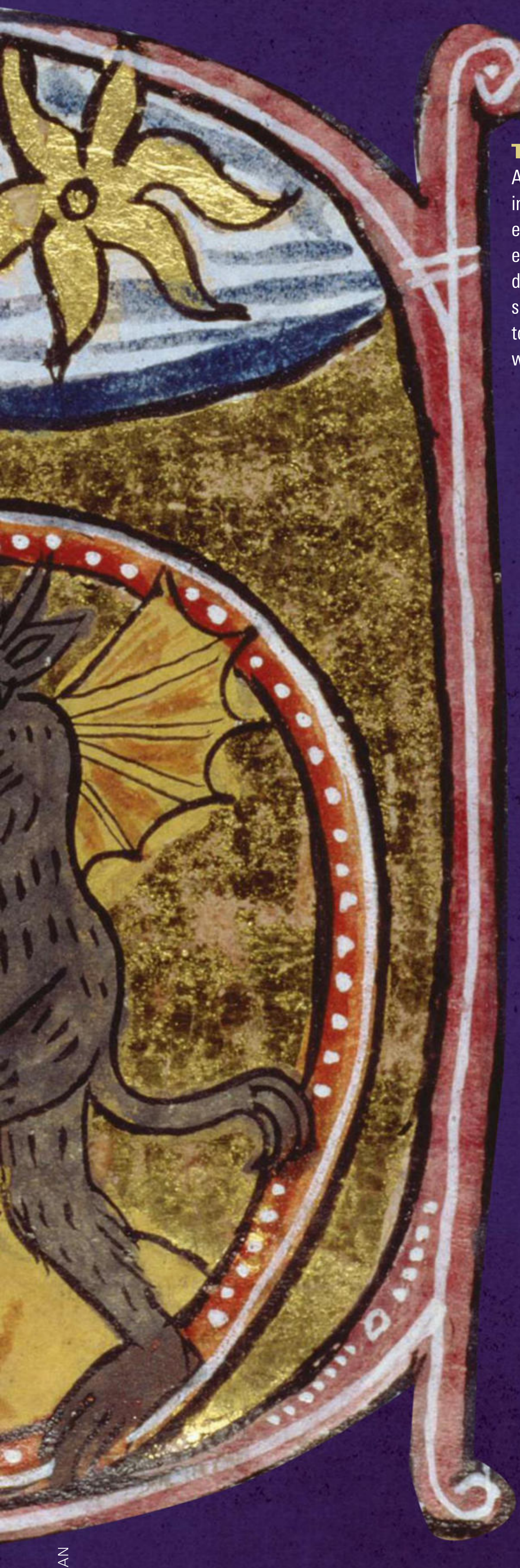


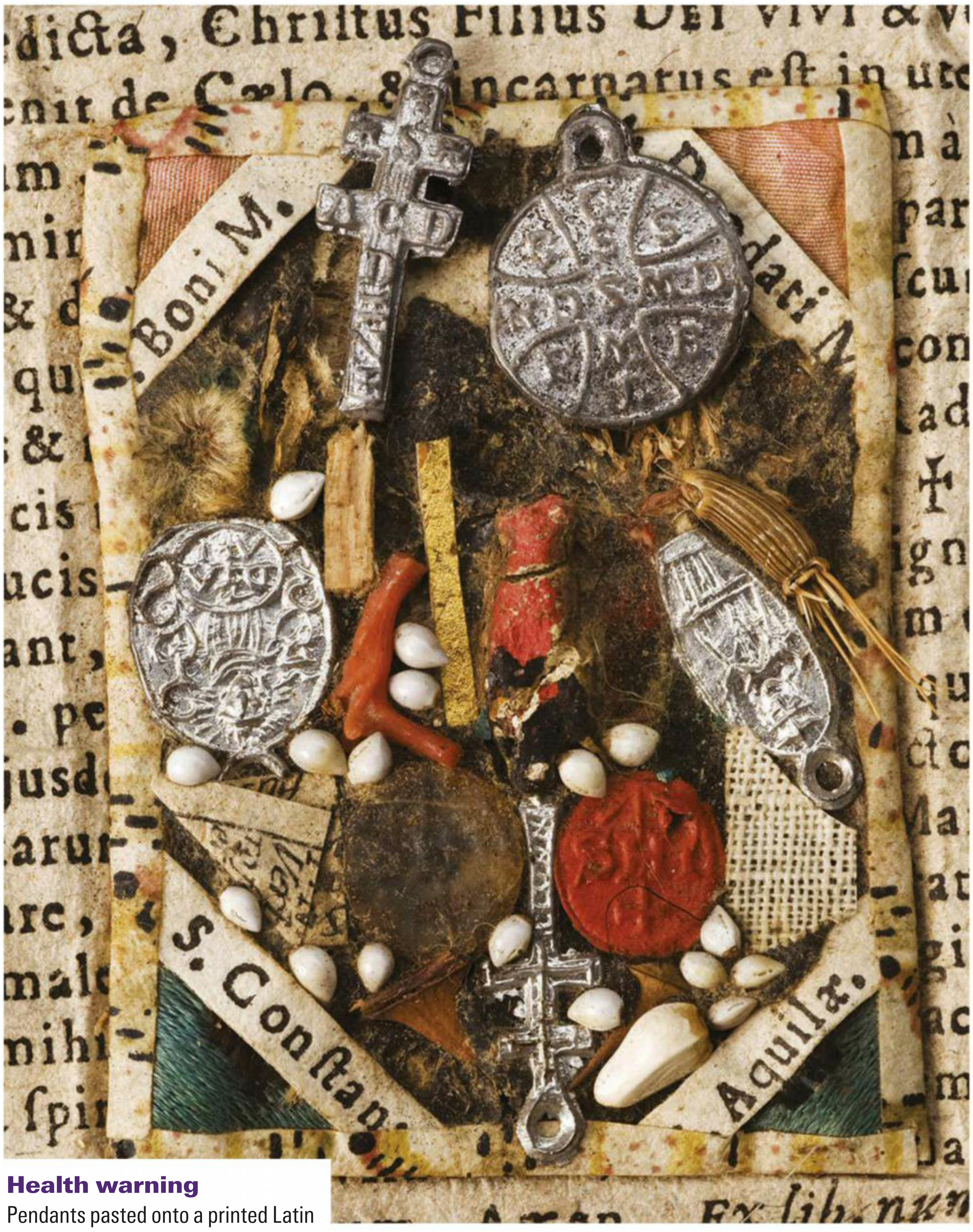


The dark side
A man summons demons in a 14th-century English encyclopaedia. "Some educated men were determined to contact the spirit world – and were willing to take great risks to do so," writes Catherine Rider

THE DEMONIC CHARM OF MEDIEVAL MAGIC

Our medieval ancestors used incantations to ward off illness, uttered prayers to summon guardian angels, and cast sinister spells on their enemies. And, writes **Catherine Rider**, there was little a disapproving clergy could do to stop them

BRIDGEMAN



Health warning
Pendants pasted onto a printed Latin verse designed to ward off plague, Bavaria, 1690–1710. The church condemned healing charms as the work of demons

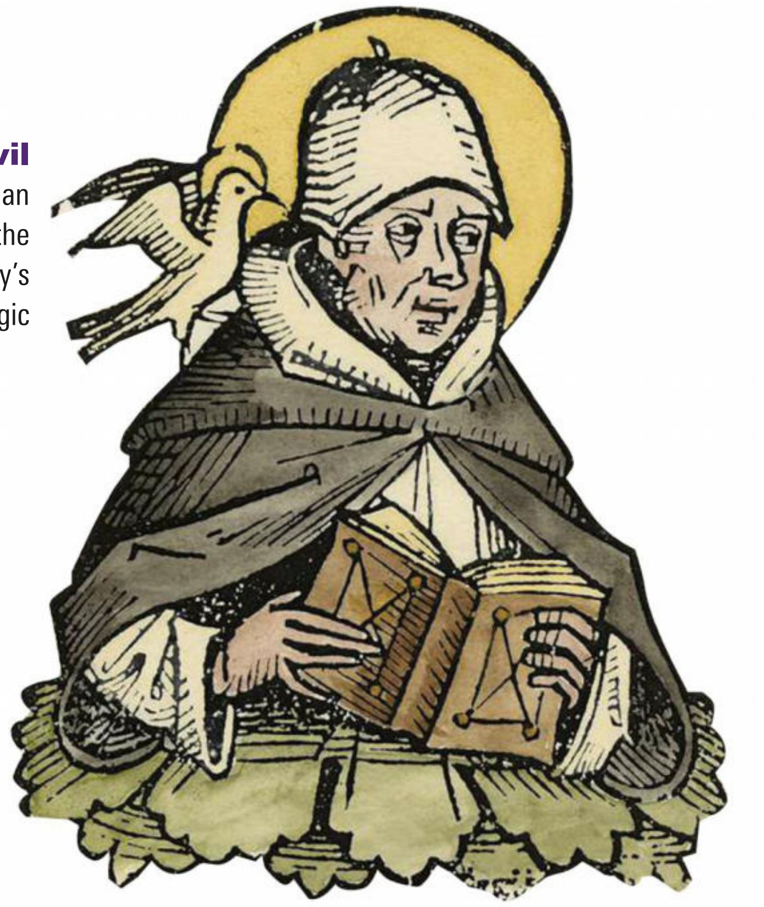
In 1280 the monks of Selby Abbey in Yorkshire made a complaint to the archbishop of York. They claimed that their abbot, Thomas, did not participate in the abbey's communal life or observe the Rule of St Benedict that governed the monks' daily routine. He had slept with two women. He had given away part of the monastery's property to his relatives. Finally, they said, after Thomas's brother had drowned in the river Ouse, he had employed an "enchanter and magician" named Elias Fauvelle to find the body, and paid him a "great sum" of money. The archbishop deposed Thomas and sent him to do penance at Durham Cathedral priory. But before this could happen, Thomas fled, taking some of the abbey's horses and possessions with him.

This complaint is unusual: medieval abbots probably did not make a habit of employing magicians. But if the monks' accusations were true, Thomas's escapades highlight just how widespread the belief in magic was in medieval society. They also suggest that it could be taken seriously by the educated as well as the illiterate, by clergymen as well as laypeople.

Medieval clergy who preached against magic sometimes liked to claim that it was only uneducated people who believed in it. Thus Stephen of Bourbon, a friar from east-central France, complained that magic "seduces uncountable souls belonging to stupid people – of whom there are an infinite number". He followed this with a series of examples, most of which featured women and peasants, two social groups that educated medieval clergy often associated with ignorance and superstition. However, Abbot Thomas does not fit that mould. He occupied a privileged position in the church and must have had some education. He was nonetheless convinced by Elias Fauvelle's abilities.

Thomas's story also shows why people turned to magic. He did so in a moment of crisis, to solve a serious problem. And, in doing so, he wasn't alone. Contemporary records suggest that anxieties over life's many problems – health, the future and love – drove numerous people to seek solace in spells and charms. Magic offered our medieval ancestors a means of control, when few other options were available. They might resort to magic in a bid to cure diseases or find lost possessions. Others were even more ambitious, employing magic to predict the future, protect themselves from evil spirits, inflict harm on enemies, or even to make someone fall in (or out) of love.

An eye for evil
The 13th-century theologian Thomas Aquinas was one of the chief architects of the clergy's censorious policy towards magic



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Anxieties over life's problems – health, the future and love – drove many to seek solace in spells and charms

But what exactly was magic? How did our medieval ancestors define it? Most of our evidence comes from clergymen, who overwhelmingly set out to criticise magic and talk people out of practising it. And the consensus they reached was that something was magic if it did not work according to natural cause and effect. As the 13th-century theologian Thomas Aquinas put it: “In things done for the purpose of producing some bodily effect, we must consider whether they seem able to produce that effect naturally: for if so it will not be unlawful to do so, since it is lawful to employ natural causes in order to produce their proper effects.” However, if something could not work naturally – the argument went – then in order to work, it must involve demons: evil spirits whose purpose was to deceive humanity.

According to this logic, evil spirits infected even the most seemingly innocent of practices – including those designed to promote healing. Aquinas singled out amulets worn on the body, and incantations that were spoken over the sick, as examples of illicit magic at work rather than the practice of legitimate medicine.

Healing charms weren’t the only form of magic in the clergy’s firing line. Men of the church voiced their disapproval of all kinds of spells, including those designed to identify thieves and locate stolen goods. Writing to his clergy in 1240, Walter de Cantilupe, bishop of Worcester, described members of his flock “resorting to incantations, as is common when something is stolen, or using a sword or a basin [presumably in an attempt to ‘see’ images on their shiny surfaces, as clairvoyants do with crystal balls]”.

Faith in magic

Yet Thomas Aquinas and Walter de Cantilupe had a problem, and that was that they were out of step with the public mood. Most people simply didn’t think that magic was wrong – whatever the church said – a fact that the friar John Bromyard acknowledged in a manual that he wrote for his fellow preachers in the 14th century. Describing lay people’s attitude to magic, he wrote: “They say: ‘What the magician predicted, happened. I have found truth in his words, for I have found the thing I lost, or I have recovered my health, or the health of my children or animals. Why then is it a sin to believe in this or to do it?’”

Another issue facing censorious clergymen was that, for many ordinary people, magic and religion were inextricably linked – most didn’t see magic as incompatible with their Christian faith. John Bromyard complained bitterly how, when deploying certain healing charms, his contemporaries often used “holy words about God and St Mary and the other saints, and many prayers”. The fact that versions of these charms were still

BRIDGEMAN/GETTY IMAGES

MEDIEVAL MAGIC AT WORK

Our ancestors used charms and spells to…

1 Ward off evil spells

According to the 13th-century physician Peter of Spain: “If coral is kept in the house, it breaks all evil spells.” Many Renaissance paintings of aristocratic children show them wearing coral jewellery for the same reason. Other substances that warded off evil magic, according to Peter, included lodestones and the plant St John’s wort.

2 Heal the sick

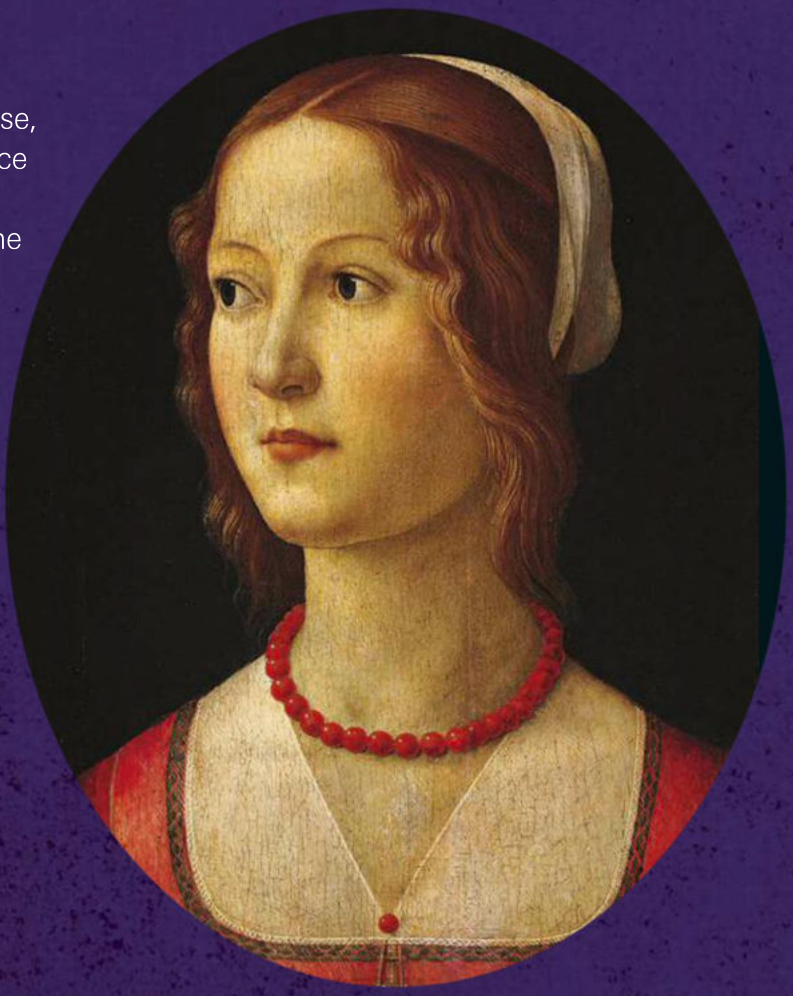
The preacher John Bromyard tells us that this healing charm was recited over sick people: “St Mary enchanted her son [Jesus] against the bite of elves and the bite of men, and she joined bone to bone, and blood to blood, and joint to joint, and so the boy recovered.” Bromyard did not say what the charm was for, but later versions of it were said to heal sprains.

3 Earn good luck

In what was an uncertain world, people often looked to magic to bring them fortune. Robert Rypon, a monk active around 1400, complained that “if someone finds a horseshoe or iron key, he says (as the common people do): ‘I shall be well today’.”

4 Stem menstrual bleeding

A 15th-century book of medical recipes (now in Exeter Cathedral library) offered women advice on how to reduce the impact of periods with an (apparently meaningless) string of letters: “Write these characters and tie them round her neck: P. F. S. x. R. O. O. x. Q. O. I. S. W. y. y. G. S. G.”



A young girl sports a necklace in a painting from c1485. Coral jewellery was widely believed to ward off evil spirits

5 Summon demons

A 15th-century German magic book advised readers to go outside town on a Thursday or Saturday, draw a circle with a sword, inscribe it with characters, and recite a series of names (possibly of demons) 12 times, beginning “Oymelor, Demefin, Lamair, Masair…” Finally, ask the demons to come to you.

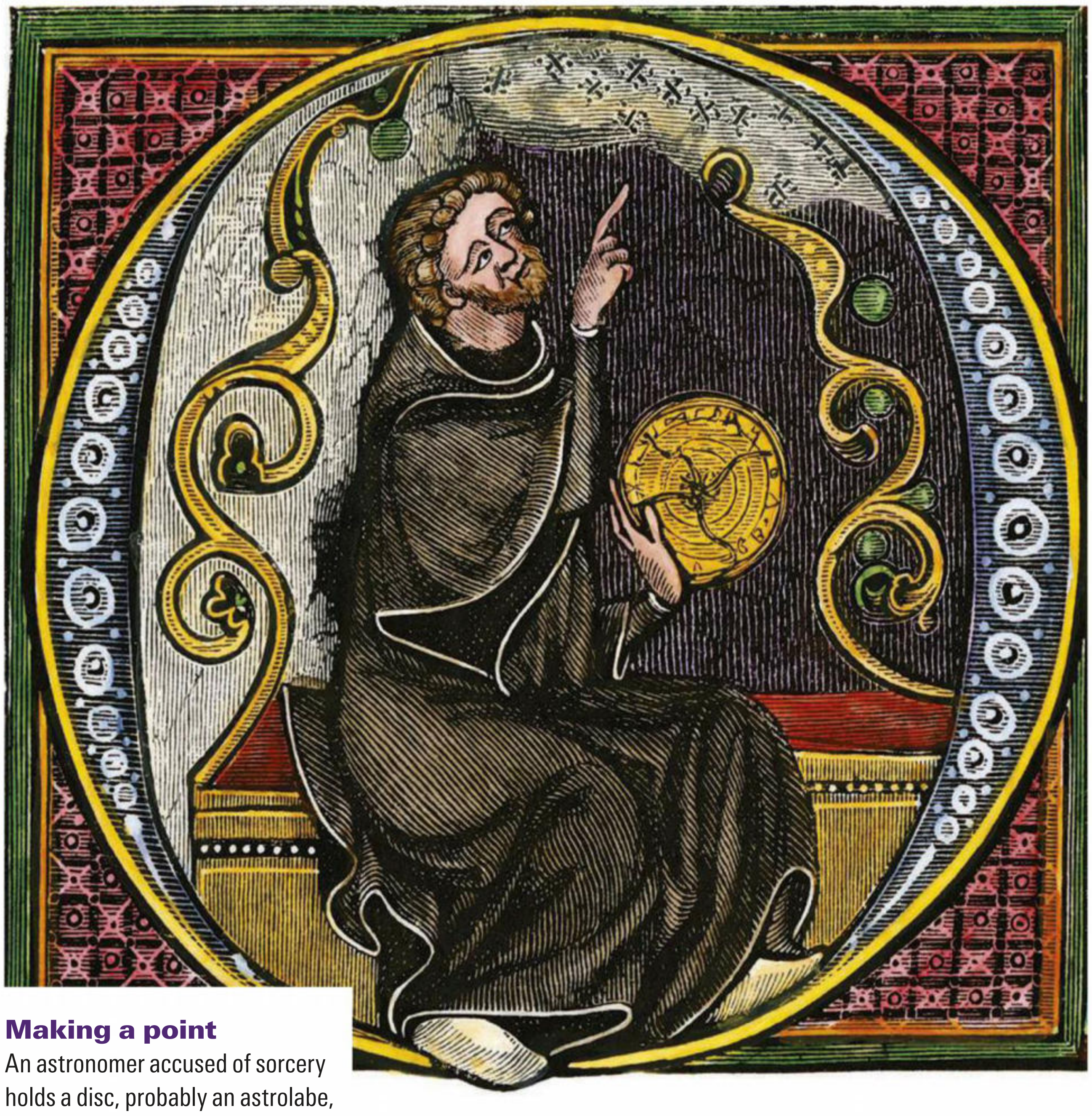
6 Strike down an enemy

Joanna Benet was brought before the church courts in London in 1490 because “she wished to measure the height of a man and make a wax candle of that height, and offer it in front of an image (in church). And as the candle is consumed, so will the man be consumed.”

7 Predict the future

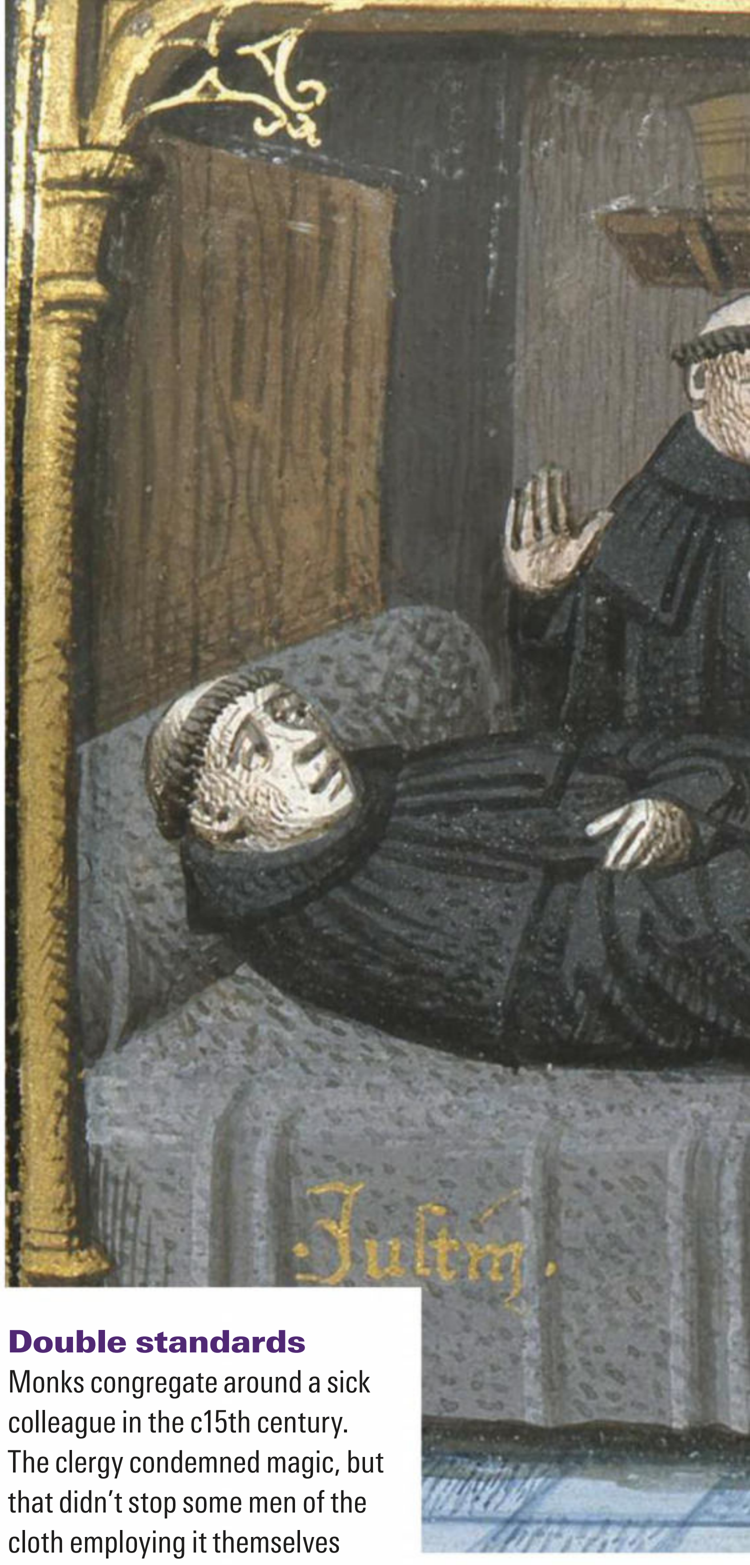
Many people believed that, if they looked into a sword, or another shiny surface (like a bowl of water or fingernail) rubbed with oil, they would see an image of the future. This was thought to be even more effective if a virgin child looked for the images.

Horseshoes – like this pair from the 12th century – have long been associated with luck, and were nailed to doors to protect homes from demons



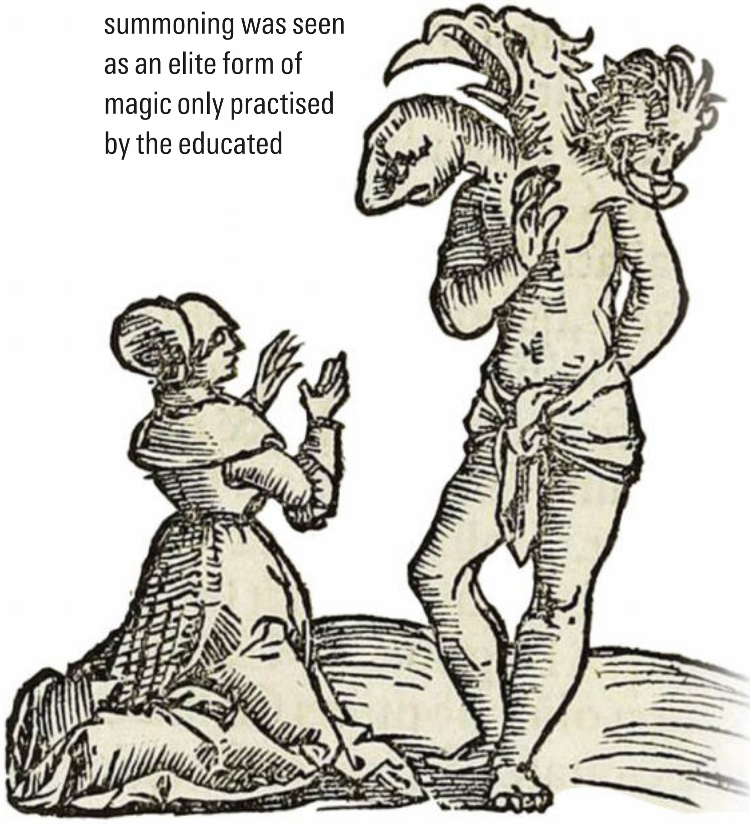
Making a point

An astronomer accused of sorcery holds a disc, probably an astrolabe, inscribed with 'magical' figures, in this woodcut image



Double standards

Monks congregate around a sick colleague in the c15th century. The clergy condemned magic, but that didn't stop some men of the cloth employing it themselves



In the spirit

A witch with a three-headed demon shown in c1550. In the Middle Ages, spirit-summoning was seen as an elite form of magic only practised by the educated

being used centuries later suggests that most people were far less concerned about the overlap between the magical and the divine than was Bromyard.

A wide cross-section of the population appears to have used the types of spells and charms described by Walter de Cantilupe and John Bromyard. Others, however, dabbled in more exclusive forms of magic, such as summoning angels or demons in order to answer questions and do the magician's bidding. The rituals involved were complicated: the magician was often told to bathe, wear clean clothes, and avoid sexual intercourse immediately before the ritual. There are lengthy prayers and strings of names to recite on particular days, over a long period; and the magician was asked to draw diagrams and strange characters, including often a magic circle where they could stand to protect them from the demons.

These rituals were too long and complex to memorise, so the practitioners had to learn them from books – most of which were written in Latin. For this reason, it seems that this brand of magic was chiefly restricted to the educated: priests, students and physicians. These were the type of people who thought of themselves as an elite who could be trusted with powerful knowledge: "You should not reveal your secrets to a woman, a child, an idiot or a drunk," warned one text.

For all its elitism, preachers took just as dim a view of spirit-summoning as they did of other forms of magic. Sermons groan with cautionary tales of magicians stepping out of their protective circle and being killed by the spirits they had just invoked. Yet such stories seem to have had little impact: some educated men were determined to establish direct contact with the spirit world – and were willing to take great risks to get it.

Renouncing their sins

Given the clergy's hostility to magic, you might expect late medieval manuscripts to be filled with grim tales of the state-approved persecution of those that practised it. But that wasn't the case, at least before the middle of the 15th century. Trials were comparatively rare, and penalties light – with those found guilty being asked to abjure their sins publicly, fast, or make offerings such as candles at mass.

In fact, it seems that, in most cases, senior clergy would only take action if magic was bound up with other offences. The long list of accusations levelled against Abbot Thomas of

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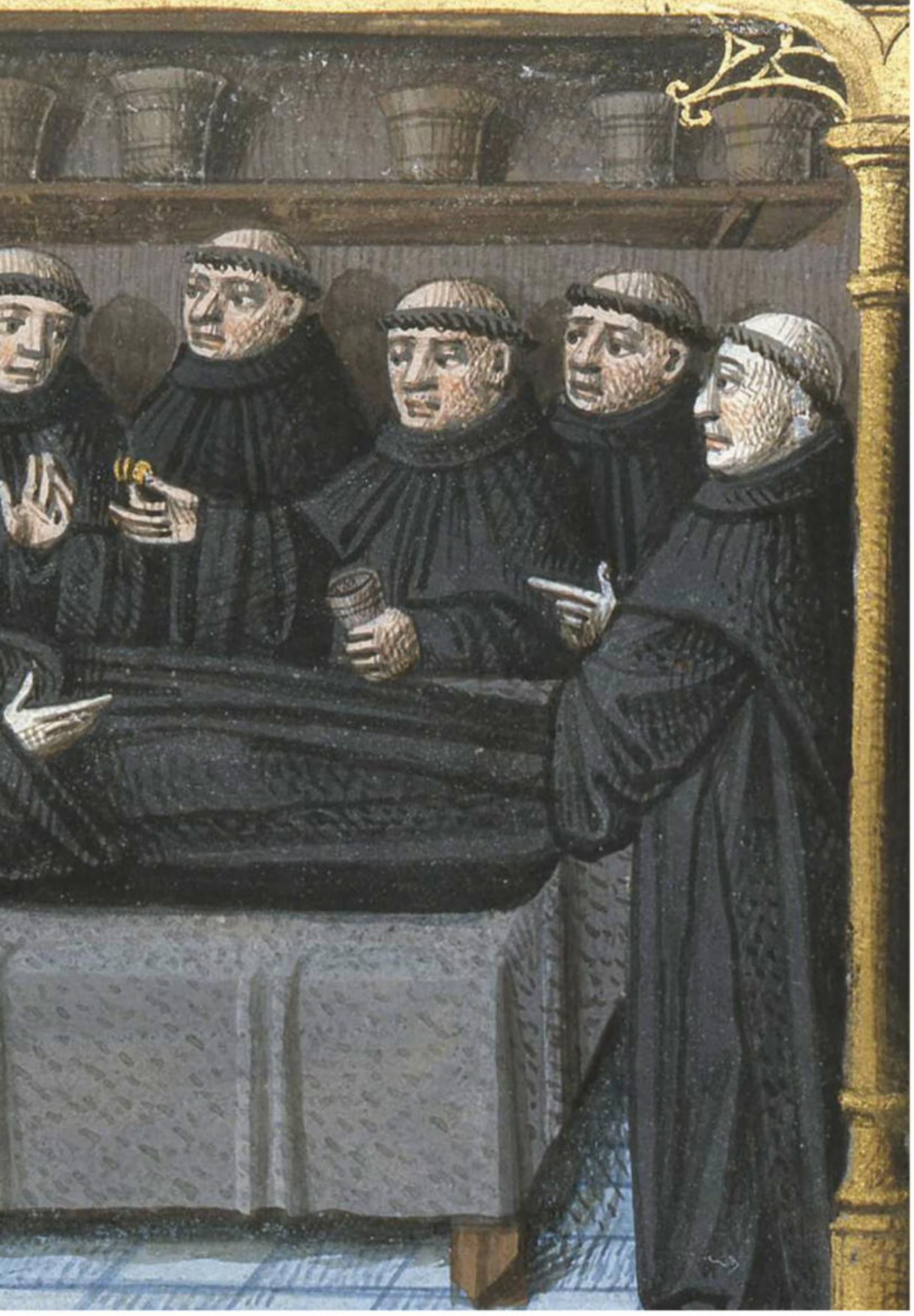

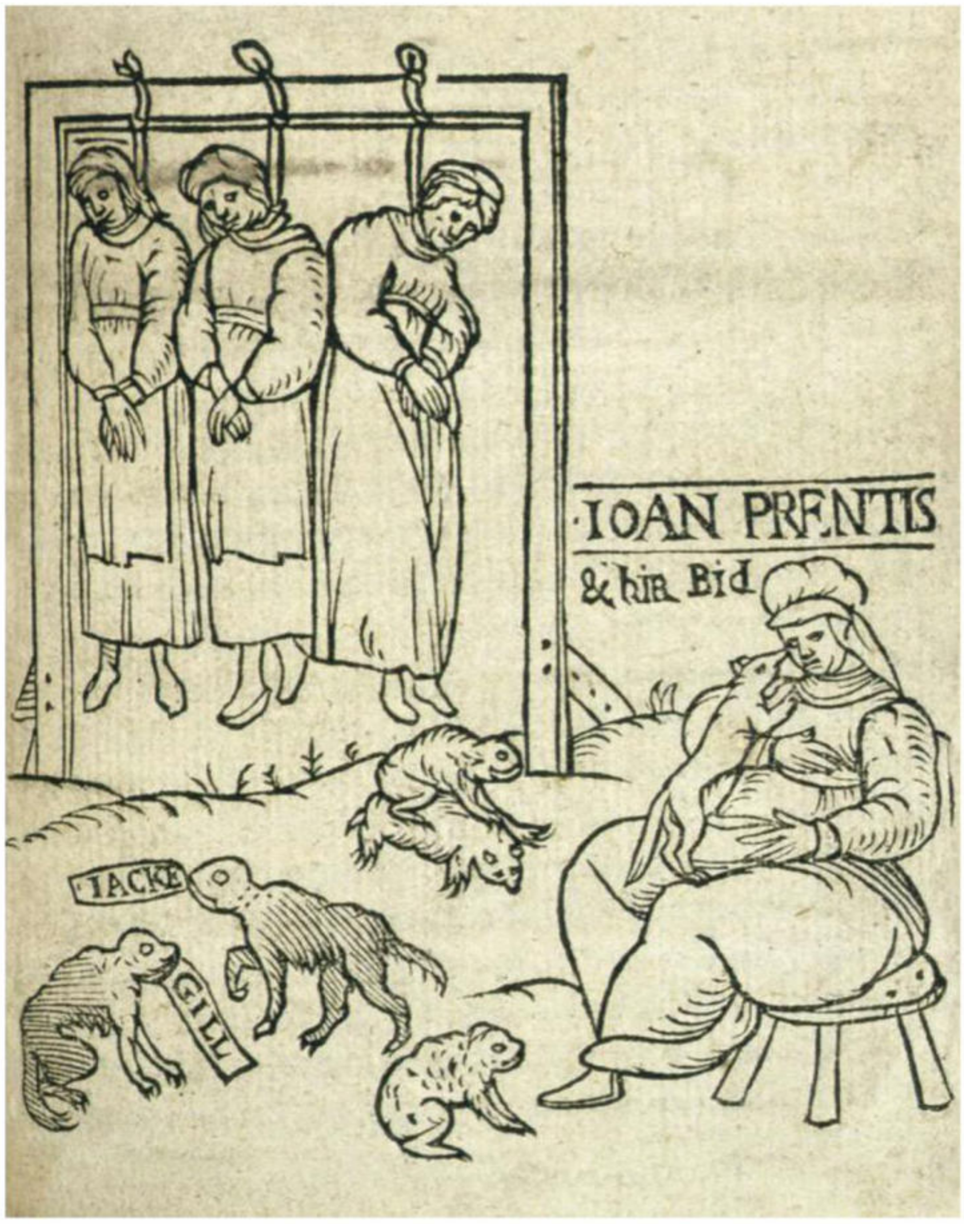

Hostile environment
Three witches are hanged in Chelmsford, Essex in 1589, as shown in a contemporary engraving. While the authorities had once handed out lenient punishments to those found guilty of practising magic, transgressors were now hunted down and executed

BRIDGEMAN

Selby Abbey suggests that he had alienated his monks for many reasons, of which using magic was just one; it was the sheer number of misdemeanours that made his case difficult to ignore.

In this, Thomas was far from unique. In 1482, Joanna Beverley came before the bishop's court in London, accused of love magic. "She asked two other sorceresses she knew to work so that Robert Stantone and another gentleman from Gray's Inn would love her and no other," the court was told. "The men committed adultery with her and, it is said, fought each other over her, and one almost killed the other. And her husband did not dare to stay with her because of these two men." The details of the case (if true) reveal just how disruptive love magic was considered to be. However, if Beverley hadn't also been accused of adultery, prostitution and pimping, she may never have been taken to court in the first place.

There was one scenario, however, in which the authorities' lenient attitude towards magic was replaced by something more grim altogether – and that was when it became entangled with politics. The Wars of the Roses era saw a spike in accusations of sorcery and witchcraft, as both sides sought to undermine the enemy by any means possible. It is hard to know whether these accusations were genuine, or baseless smear campaigns. Probably, it was a bit of both. Either way, the consequences for those accused could be serious, even fatal.

The Wars of the Roses saw a spike in charges of sorcery, as both sides sought to undermine the enemy by any means possible

In 1441, Eleanor Cobham, wife of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, the uncle and heir of King Henry VI, was accused of using magic to try to kill Henry. Also implicated were Roger Bolingbroke, her personal clerk; John Home, Eleanor's chaplain; Thomas Southwell, a physician and priest; and a woman named Margery Jourdemayne, who had a longstanding reputation as a magical practitioner. Interestingly, Eleanor did not deny using magic, but she said she had resorted to it to help her conceive a child, not to harm the king – a plausible claim since she and Humphrey had no children after several years of marriage. She was nonetheless imprisoned for life. Yet that was a better fate than the one endured by three of her co-accused: Roger Bolingbroke was hanged, drawn and quartered, Thomas Southwell died in the Tower of London, and Margery Jourdemayne was burned for heresy. Only John Home, who seems to have been less closely involved, was pardoned.

These were particularly brutal punishments; they were also a sign of things to come. By the time Eleanor Cobham was thrown in prison, official attitudes to magic had begun to change in both church and state. The late Middle Ages saw the first witch trials, and by the 16th and 17th centuries, thousands of people across Europe (often, but not always, women) found themselves accused of being in league with the devil and executed for witchcraft. The period when the church tolerated magic – however disapprovingly – had come to a grisly end. **H**

Catherine Rider is associate professor in medieval history at the University of Exeter

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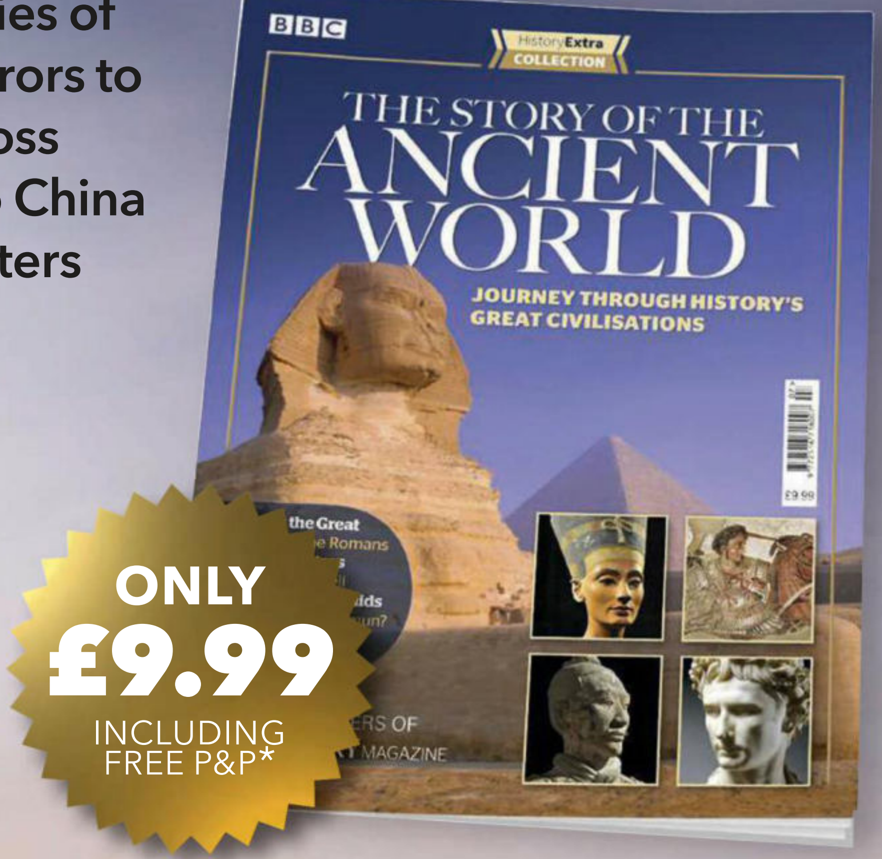

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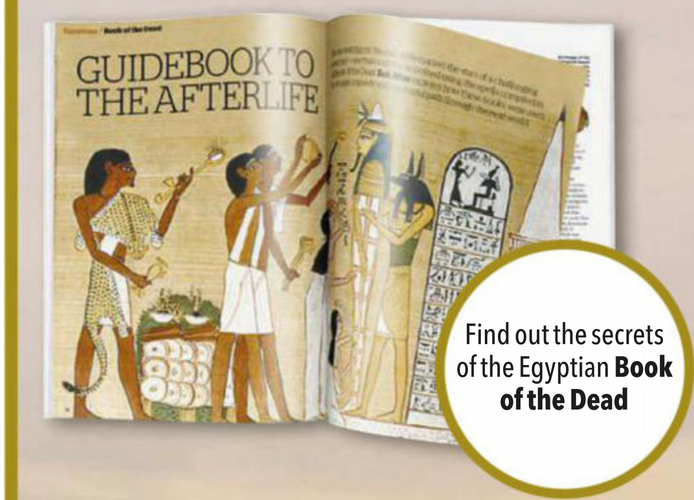

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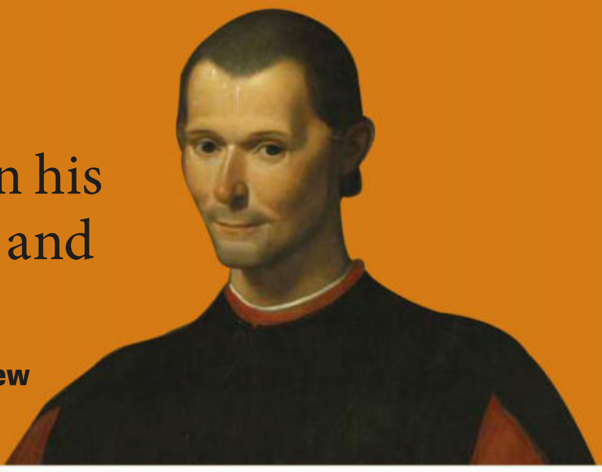
BOOKS

RENAISSANCE

"His allure to those who knew him lay in his stinging wit, charm and dark humour"

Joanne Paul on Alexander Lee's new biography of Machiavelli › page 56



SECOND WORLD WAR

"Otto evaded justice by using the 'ratline' – a network who smuggled Nazis to South America"

Keith Lowe reviews Philippe Sands' *The Ratline: Love, Lies and Justice on the Trail of a Nazi Fugitive* › page 58

SPAIN

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"The king simply didn't care what people thought about these women and their role in his life"

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"Readers will enjoy marvelling at these weird and wonderful flickerings of the Irish past"

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GETTY IMAGES

INTERVIEW / LINDA PORTER

"You've got to be impressed by how these women played the system"

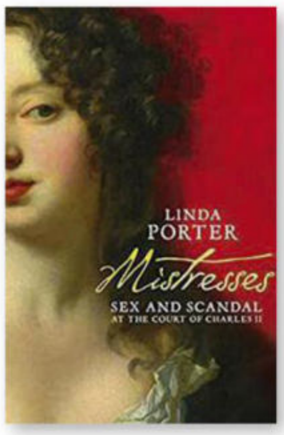
LINDA PORTER talks to Ellie Cawthorne about her new book, which looks at the women who shared the bed of King Charles II and what these relationships tell us about Restoration England

Ellie Cawthorne: First of all, why did it matter who Charles II was sleeping with?

Linda Porter: Charles's love life was a reflection of the luxury and glamour – but also the corruption – of the royal court at the time. The extramarital relationships that he enjoyed so unashamedly are important because they show that the king cared very little for public opinion. He avoided the general public like the plague, and really wasn't embarrassed at all about what people might think of these women or their role in his life. Charles's reign was a time of wars and disasters – plague, the Great Fire of London, a mini Ice Age – and through it all, his continued consorting with women was both a distraction and a way of bluntly saying: "I don't care what you think." He even seems to have used the fact that he produced so many illegitimate children to show the world that, while he didn't have any legitimate heirs, he was still a very virile monarch.

But this behaviour did threaten to compromise his position – Charles was not nearly so popular as a lot of people think he was. The fact that he was throwing huge amounts of money at his mistresses went down very badly, as you can imagine. And for some people, particularly in the cultured, political and literary classes, the entire tenor and outlook of behaviour at his court was deemed repulsive and reprehensible. One aspect of monarchy is having a certain mystique, and Charles's behaviour blew that mystique apart.

Charles has passed into English folk memory as the 'merry monarch', a man who had this great air of bonhomie about him. He's seen as a bit of a naughty boy (there's a lot of 'wink, wink, nudge, nudge' discussion that surrounds him) but a likeable one. But, like almost everyone who's written about him, I grew to dislike him quite intensely during the course of writing my book.



Mistresses: Sex and Scandal at the Court of Charles II
by Linda Porter
(Picador, 304 pages, £20)

Your book profiles seven women who shaped Charles's life. Who do you write about first?

I start the book with the story of a Welsh good-time girl, Lucy Walter – the first of Charles's mistresses that we know anything about. They met as teenagers, when Charles was in exile as Prince of Wales, and appear to have shared a passionate summer fling. There was a rumour that Charles and Lucy had contracted some form of marriage, but he persistently denied this. He even tried to publish papers to prove to the contrary, and no such marriage contract has ever been found. However, the liaison left Lucy pregnant with what would be Charles's first of 13 illegitimate children. That son would go on to become James, Duke of Monmouth, and cause his father trouble throughout his lifetime.

Charles had obviously made a decision quite early on that the relationship wasn't going anywhere and he attempted to try to fob Lucy Walter off. But she made a considerable nuisance of herself for many years. She had very poor judgment, and appears to have been a fairly highly strung woman. She was alert to the fact that her son was her meal ticket, and basically used him as a bargaining chip. Eventually, having been given some money in the hope that she would shut up, she spiralled downwards financially and ended up in Paris, where she became very ill. Charles's brother, James II, rather unkindly said that she'd died of syphilis, but there's no proof of what killed her.

One of the most significant women in the early years of Charles's reign was Barbara Palmer. What can you tell us about her?

Barbara was a clever, difficult woman – a notorious beauty with a very passionate nature. After a rather colourful lifestyle during the Protectorate, she was married by the time she met Charles. Her husband, Roger Palmer, was genuinely very much in love with her; his marriage to Barbara was perhaps the most disastrous mistake of his life.

Barbara became Charles's chief mistress throughout the 1660s. She was a voracious woman sexually and financially, who clearly had both a zest for life and an inordinate greed. She had numerous other lovers during their affair, including acrobats and actors, and the king endowed her with titles, jewels and money. Barbara made sure that each of the five children she bore him – the biggest tally of any of his mistresses – had titles and were well looked-after. While she doesn't actually appear to have had a huge amount of political influence, she was implicated in the downfall of the Earl of Clarendon, who had been Charles's most loyal and faithful adviser during the long period of exile.

There was clearly a tremendous physical attraction between them, but by the end of the 1660s their relationship was on the rocks, punctuated by fierce fights. And Charles was never a man who was entirely interested in any one woman at a time.

What were Charles's notable relationships after his affair with Barbara had cooled off?

One woman who came to be very significant later in his life was a fascinating French lady from a very minor aristocratic family in Brittany: the wily and rather prim Louise de Kéroualle. She had also been in the service of Charles's sister Henrietta, the Duchess of Orléans, and when Henrietta died in 1670, her brother undertook

PROFILE

Linda Porter is an author and historian whose previous books include *Royal Renegades: The Children of Charles I and the English Civil Wars* (Macmillan, 2016), *Crown of Thistles: The Fatal Inheritance of Mary Queen of Scots* (Macmillan, 2013) and *Katherine the Queen: The Remarkable Life of Katherine Parr* (Macmillan, 2009)

PHOTOGRAPH BY NICK DAWE

to look after her waiting women. Charles took a great shine to Louise and, even more than Barbara Palmer had been, she became the nearest equivalent to his chief mistress – what the French would have called a *maîtresse-en-titre*. She took on functions similar to those of a queen consort and had her own luxuriously furnished apartments in Whitehall and Hampton Court.

For many years, Louise continued to hold a very strong place in Charles's affections and he called her 'Fubs' – an old English word for someone who's a bit on the tubby side. By the time of his death, Louise was more or less unchallenged. However, with his death, her position changed instantly and she realised it wouldn't be a very good idea to stay in England, as she wasn't really welcome there. She took herself off to estates that had been granted her in France and lived out a long life there, until she died in 1735.

One of Louise's rivals – and perhaps the most famous of Charles's mistresses – was Nell Gwyn. What can you tell us about her?
Louise and Nell were always vying with one another for Charles's affections. The pair despised each other so much that Nell even called Louise 'Squintabella'.

What's rather curious is that, although the colourful stories that have been passed down in English folklore about Nell Gwyn make her the most well-known of Charles's mistresses, in my view she was one of the least significant.

Nell came into the king's life in the late 1660s. He was very interested in the theatre, and he spotted Nell on the stage. She was one of England's first female actors, and was known for her brilliant comic performances. (Her forays into tragedy seem to have been less successful.) Nell's background is fairly murky – it's thought she was the possibly illegitimate daughter of an alcoholic brothel keeper, and she worked as an orange seller in the theatre before she took to the stage.

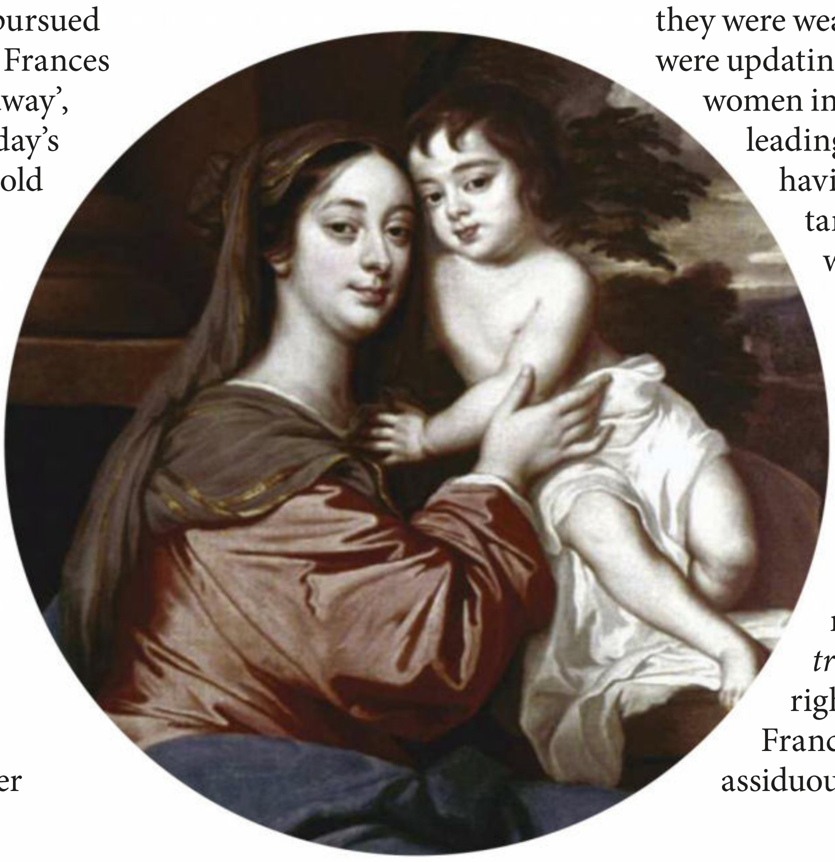
But although the affair lasted several years, Nell was never really accepted at court. She came from an entirely different social class and was viewed as vulgar and inappropriate. However, I don't think this bothered her very much – she was known for her cheerfulness and sense of humour. While the king's other mistresses were given titles, Nell never was, probably because of her background. Nevertheless, Charles set her up in a house on Pall Mall and she had two sons by him, who did both eventually receive titles.

How much choice did the women involved have? Were all of Charles's attempts at seduction successful?
No, they weren't. Someone who Charles pursued almost obsessively was a teenager named Frances Teresa Stuart. I call her 'the one that got away', and her story has some eerie echoes of today's #MeToo movement. In 1662, the 15-year-old Frances was brought to England from France at the suggestion of Charles's sister Henrietta, on the selling point that she was supposedly the prettiest girl in the world. Which, given what Henrietta knew about her brother's proclivities, was not terribly kind. Initially, she seemed to be just an empty-headed teenager who laughed at everything and liked building castles out of packs of cards. But either she learned quickly how to deal with the difficult situation she was in, or else she wasn't quite as empty-headed as people assumed. As far as we know, Frances never actually slept with Charles, but she had to put up with being petted and pawed in public. After around four years of resisting the king's advances, by the time she was approaching the age of 20, Frances Teresa realised she couldn't fight him off anymore. And so she eloped in rather spectacular fashion with the Duke of Richmond and Lennox, whom Charles disliked intensely. As you can imagine, the king was tremendously unhappy when he heard the news. But the marriage seems to have been a love match, and Frances Teresa turned herself into a competent businesswoman to help manage her husband's extensive estates, inheriting his lands when he died and settling down to a quiet life.

> **"These women used their relationships with the king to secure sufficient financial provision for themselves and their children, in the form of lands, grants and gifts"**

Image conscious

Barbara Palmer with her son by King Charles II, Charles Fitzroy, painted by Peter Lely as the Madonna and child

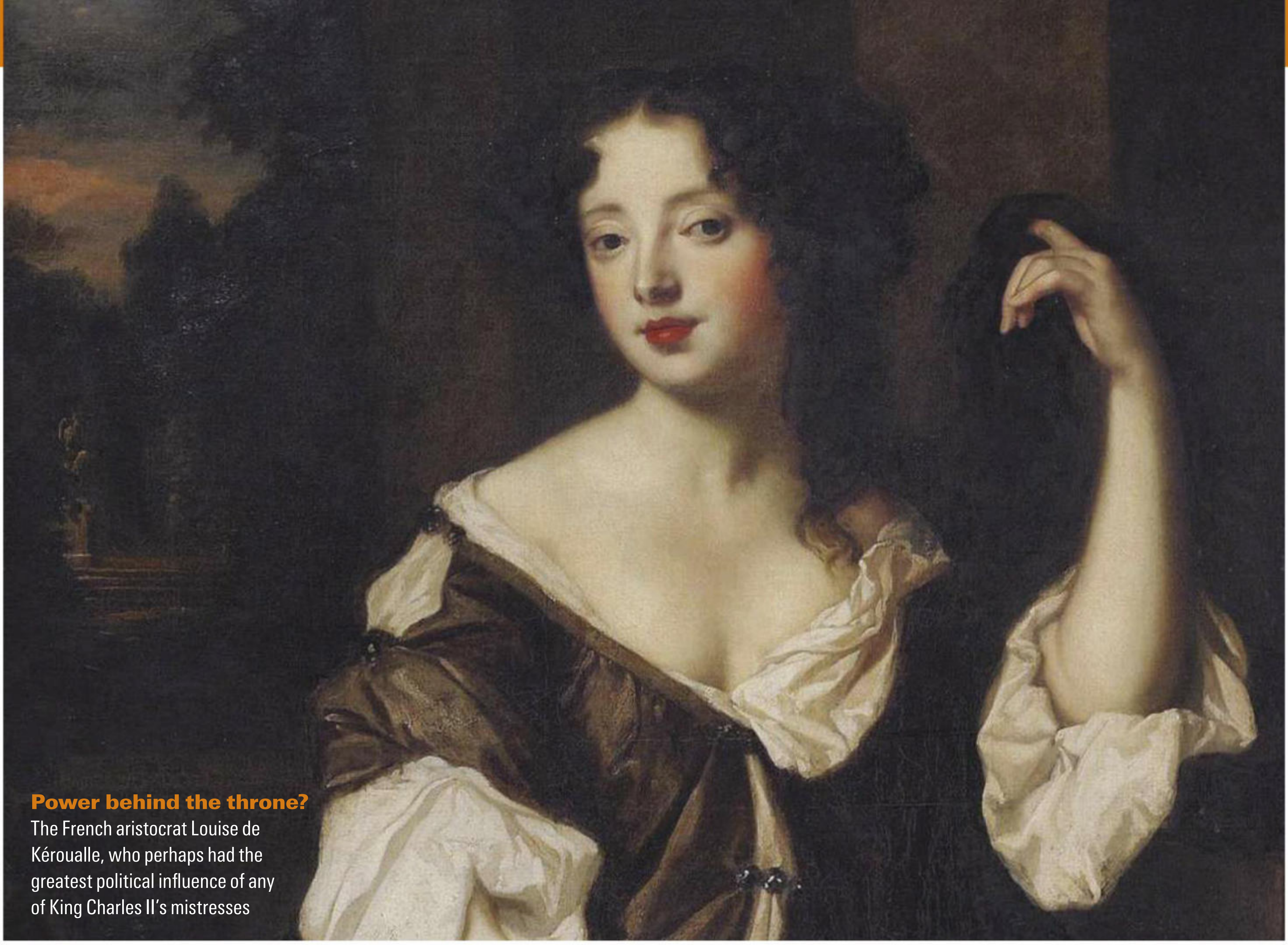


What benefits did being the king's mistress afford you?
The most obvious opportunities were financial. James II said of the Restoration era that there was nothing so rare as money. All of these people were trying desperately to survive. Most of these women used their relationships with the king to make sure that there was sufficient financial provision for themselves and their children to last for their lifetime. This provision could consist of lands, properties, grants, expensive gifts and access to various forms of taxation – precautions that would ensure that they weren't left high and dry if they were suddenly thrown on the scrapheap.

The second way that the women used these relationships to their own advantage was using the prestige that came from being the king's mistress, even if that prestige was seen as somewhat tarnished. Barbara is a good example of this. She was a great celebrity. Her fans, if you want to use a modern term, even included Samuel Pepys, who seems to have had a rather creepy interest in gazing at her underwear hanging on washing lines. People wanted to know everything that was happening to these women: what they were wearing, where they were going, how they were updating their properties. Like a lot of the other women in Charles's life, Barbara patronised leading artists, because she understood that having her portrait painted was an important way of maintaining the image she wished to project. There are some wonderful paintings of Barbara as Mary Magdalene and as the Madonna, which appear almost blasphemous.

Which of Charles's mistresses had the most political influence?
I would argue that Louise was the most involved in politics of any of the mistresses – at any rate, she certainly *tried* to be and believed that she had the right to be. Like Barbara Palmer and Frances Teresa Stuart before her, Louise was assiduously courted by politicians, who believed

ALAMY



Power behind the throne?
The French aristocrat Louise de Kéroualle, who perhaps had the greatest political influence of any of King Charles II's mistresses

– rightly or wrongly – that she was a gateway to the king. Even the French king Louis XIV hoped that Louise might be helpful in passing on snippets of information. To describe her as a spy is perhaps a little over the top, but she did receive a small stipend.

In reality, Louise dabbled in politics without showing a great deal of understanding of what was happening in the country at the time. And it's hard to gauge how much political sway she actually held over the king. Charles clearly held her in a great deal of affection, but the question of whether he actually paid much attention to what she said is quite another matter.

How did all of these extramarital affairs affect Charles's relationship with his wife?

The Portuguese princess Catherine of Braganza, Charles's queen consort, is often represented as a weepy dope who was totally innocent and had no idea about anything that was going on in England. But on closer inspection, this appears not to have been the case.

Of all the women who knew Charles, I think his wife was probably the only one who really genuinely loved him, apart from his sister Henrietta. But by the late 1660s, Catherine had had three miscarriages. When it became clear that she wasn't going to be able to carry a child to full term, Charles was put under quite a lot of pressure to divorce her. Of course, he didn't do so and she remained in England for his lifetime. Throughout that time, Catherine was faced with an insuperable obstacle: her husband's proclivity for other women. Charles made it brutally clear, both to her and others, that he was not going to be moved on this issue. His insistence that Barbara be appointed one of the ladies of the queen's bedchamber, for example, bordered on calculated cruelty.

Catherine's life is an interesting one, because while obviously there was much humiliation and sadness, it isn't as negative as people often think. She wasn't just a pitiful nobody, but a substantial woman who seems to have forged for herself a rather interesting and satisfying independent existence, considering the circumstances.

When it became clear that she wouldn't be able to deliver an heir, she and Charles essentially led separate lives, with Catherine only turning up for the races at Newmarket and other state occasions when she might be needed. She also had a considerable amount of cultural influence. She patronised Flemish and Italian artists (but ignored anyone French in a deliberate riposte to Louise de Kéroualle) and was a trend-setting 'influencer' of sorts: we actually have Catherine to thank for the popularity of tea drinking in England. Considering she was compelled to stay in an unwelcoming country that pretty much viewed her as an irrelevance for many years, the fact that she succeeded at all in making a life for herself is quite admirable.

How should we view the power dynamics in these relationships?

Restoration England was of course a very patriarchal society, so inevitably the power dynamics were never equal. Many of these women were targeted by some incredibly misogynist criticism. Barbara Palmer, in particular, was the butt of many a shockingly obscene joke in various scurrilous publications shared around inns and taverns. Although a large proportion of these attacks were anonymous, it was possible to hazard a good guess as to where many of them came from.

But what most of the women – certainly Barbara Palmer and Louise de Kéroualle – did was to make sure that they could work these unequal relationships to their own benefit. At a time when it was incredibly difficult to do so, these women managed to forge an existence for themselves in which they could, to a very large degree, manage their own affairs. You may not like them, you may not admire them, but you've got to be impressed by how skilfully they played the system. H

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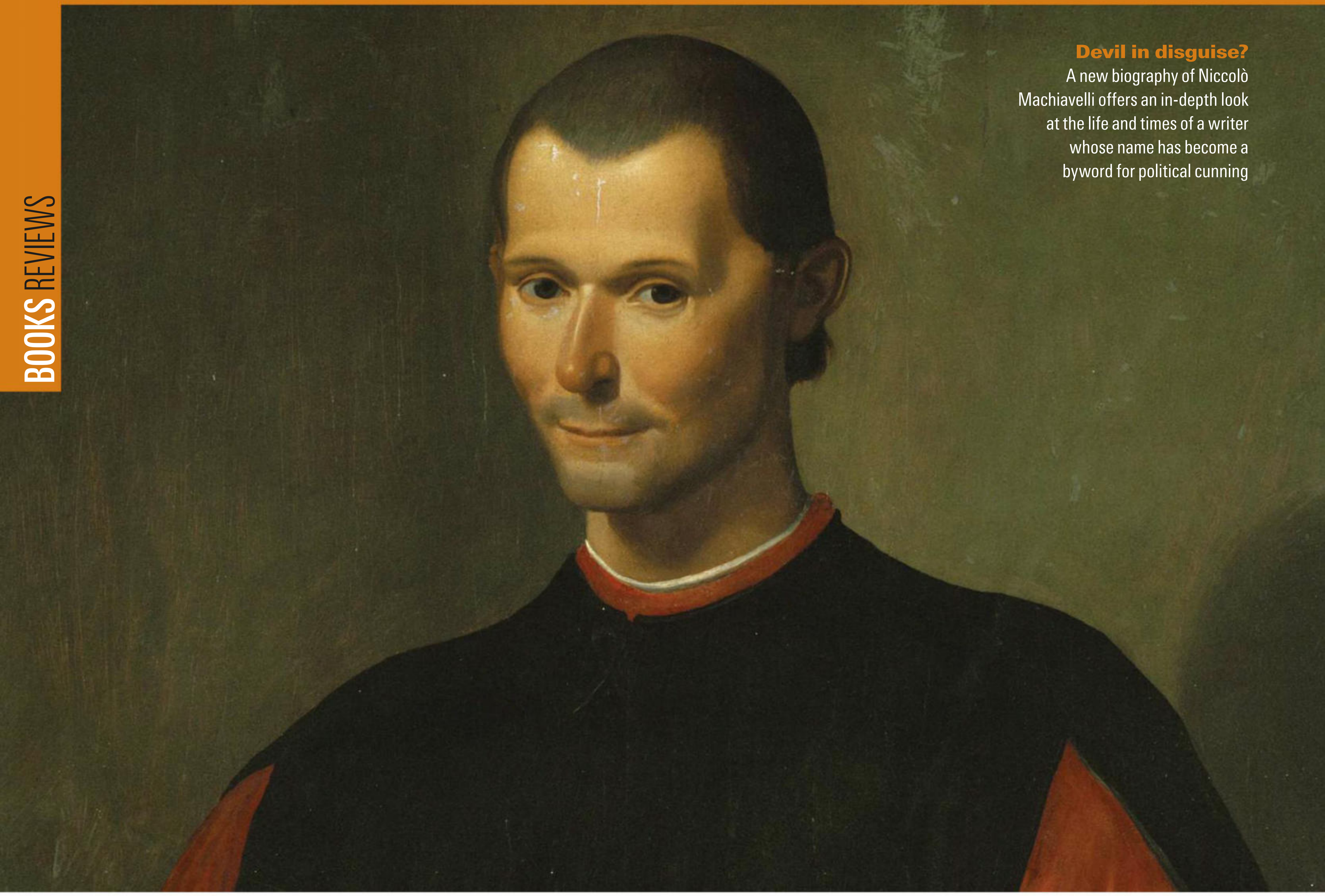
Listen to an extended version of this interview with Linda Porter on our podcast soon at **historyextra.com/podcast**

ALAMY



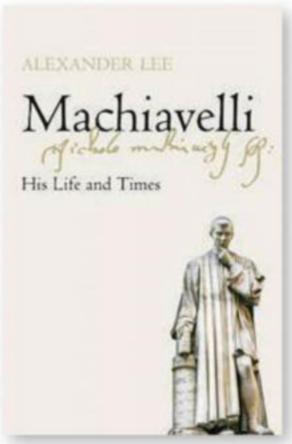
Devil in disguise?
A new biography of Niccolò Machiavelli offers an in-depth look at the life and times of a writer whose name has become a byword for political cunning

GETTY IMAGES

RENAISSANCE

Fortune’s fool

JOANNE PAUL applauds a comprehensive yet vivid portrait of Niccolò Machiavelli, one of the Renaissance era’s greatest – and most controversial – thinkers



ALEXANDER LEE
Machiavelli
His Life and Times

Machiavelli: His Life and Times
by Alexander Lee
Picador, 768 pages, £30

On his deathbed at his farm outside of Florence in 1527, the politician, diplomat and writer Niccolò Machiavelli is said to have turned to his grieving friends and told them of a dream he had just had. In it, he had seen two groups of people. The first, dejected and poor, were headed to heaven. The second group, richly dressed and discussing political and philosophical matters, were damned to hell. It was a scene Machiavelli would have seen represented on countless reredoses, paintings and frescos during a life seeped in the magnificence of the Italian Renaissance. It was a spectre meant to inspire fear, humility and the rejection of earthly temptations. Turning to his friends, the suffering Machiavelli told them he had spied his great heroes and those who had inspired him among the gathering of the damned: men such as Seneca, Tacitus, Plato and Plutarch. With so many interesting people to talk to, he told his friends with a wry chuckle, perhaps he would prefer hell after all.

There is, thankfully, no attempt to sort Machiavelli into the category of redeemed or saved in this rich new biography from Renaissance historian Alexander Lee. His life and times are presented in their complex, contradictory fullness, as is Machiavelli himself. With a deft touch, Lee lets the events of his subject’s life speak for themselves in describing the character of a man who would become known as ‘Mach-Evil’ and whose name would become synonymous with self-interested schemers.

Lacking in natural diplomatic skill, Machiavelli was at best a competent bureaucrat and a moderately impressive speaker. His rather abrupt and unexpected rise came about largely thanks to his *lack* of any relevant political connections. Nevertheless, his allure to those who knew him lay in his stinging wit, charm and dark humour; his appeal to those who employed him was his ability to connect sharp insight into contemporary political events with a broad understanding of the ebbs and flows of history and fortune.

Fortune plays as an important role in this biography as it does in Machiavelli's own work. The elusive figure of *Fortuna* standing over her wheel, spun at her will and caprice, is inescapable in the constant and bewildering movements of Renaissance politics. The narrative is supported by a steady rhythm of dashed hopes and disappointed expectations as the various players that Lee describes vie to hold their place in a cut-throat and merciless world. Machiavelli himself seems especially attuned to the rise and fall of fortune, though not in a way that allows him to master it. Lee describes with some poignancy the frequent bouts of depression in which Machiavelli found himself when his best-laid plans came to naught.

The relationship between Machiavelli's life and his times forms the structure of Lee's biography. The politics of Florence – and even the city itself – feels at times like a character in Lee's narrative: Machiavelli's muse, lover and antagonist all in one. The major players in Renaissance politics each make their appearance in Machiavelli's life, leaving an impression that is reflected in his work. Lee's ability to make connections between Machiavelli's political career and literary outputs ensures that the inclusion of the latter does not interrupt the narrative. He is able to provide a lively account of Machiavelli's daily life while writing his best-known work, *The Prince*, and details with great emotion – and historical irony – the devastation felt by its author when he concluded that the work was a complete waste of time. The inclusion of Machiavelli's many other, and lesser-known, works are a welcome addition, providing a wider understanding of a writer too often defined by a single piece.

There is often a tendency to view the 'great' thinkers of the past in a sort of independent isolation. Machiavelli himself wrote that his contemporaries failed to appreciate the context of the classical texts they were reading, and thus had lost touch with their meaning. Although historians of today have learned that works such as Machiavelli's ought to be read in the contexts of their times, we do at times need a biography such as this one to bring it to life, and to remind us of the many relationships and diverse sources of influence that may act on a writer.

Lee shows Machiavelli at the centre of a number of overlapping networks of friends, colleagues and kin. It is his friends, with whom he whored and philosophised by turns, that serve to prop him up, provide him with relevant political connections and give him an audience to address his ideas to. In writing *The Prince*, Machiavelli was without many of these friends, but he was surrounded by his family, including those – such as his wife – to whom he never quite devoted enough attention.

Lee's biography does not claim to say anything new, but rather to bring together existing work to present the reader with a 'vivid' experience of Machiavelli's life as he lived it, against the backdrop of bloody European war and politics. There is no question he succeeds in this, and Lee is to be especially applauded for his even-handed treatment of a controversial historical figure. He also accomplishes his aim of producing an 'exhaustive' biography: at more than 750 pages, it is not a light read. To some, these two objectives may appear in competition, and the engaging story of Machiavelli's life can be lost in the desire to provide a detailed engagement with European politics.

> **" Machiavelli would become known as 'Mach-Evil' and his name would become synonymous with self-interested schemers "**

Death, nevertheless, comes all too soon, even in a life of such diverse experience and a biography of such rich detail. Machiavelli died entirely unaware of the profound impact his works were to have on the landscape of European politics, virtually untouched by all the politicking accomplished in his lifetime. The Machiavelli introduced by Lee's biography seems to have sought vindication of his own relevance above all else.

Nearly 500 years after his death, it is beyond the scope of the historian to say whether Niccolò Machiavelli enjoys paradise or excellent conversation, but there is no question that he remains a significant and – thanks to Lee's biography – vivid historical figure. H

Joanne Paul is senior lecturer at the University of Sussex, focussing on the intellectual and cultural history of the Renaissance

AUTHORS ON THE PODCAST

Hadley Freeman on uncovering her family's history

"I grew up hearing vague stories – for example, that my grandmother had come from France to America to escape the war. So I always had an idea there was a story in the background. But then I went to her old apartment and found this shoebox filled with letters, photos and other keepsakes that didn't make any sense. And then, at the bottom, a drawing by Picasso."

Priyamvada Gopal on resistance in the British empire

"The history of the British empire is also almost entirely the history of *resistance* to the British empire. In India, for instance, there was constant rebellion, constant revolt. The empire was challenged almost from the very beginning, and therefore any history of empire that doesn't take on board the history of resistance is necessarily a partial history."

James Shapiro on Shakespeare in America

"Shakespeare's work spoke to Elizabethan preoccupations – but in many ways, he speaks more clearly and directly to American preoccupations than English ones. America embraced Shakespeare as its national poet even after breaking with England in 1776, and he's never really had a rival as a writer everyone reads. But one of the things that I learned while writing this book is that America's Shakespeare is not England or Britain's Shakespeare."

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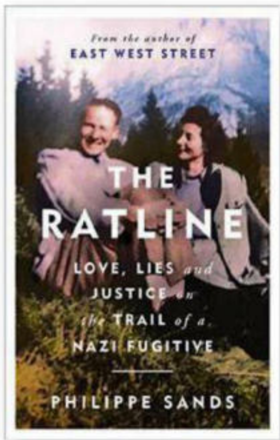
NAZI GERMANY

The sins of the father

KEITH LOWE recommends an intensely personal account of one man's struggle to come to terms with his father's responsibility for Nazi crimes


From the author of EAST WEST STREET
THE RATLINE
LOVE, LIES and JUSTICE on the TRAIL of a NAZI FUGITIVE
PHILIPPE SANDS

The Ratline: Love, Lies and Justice on the Trail of a Nazi Fugitive
by Philippe Sands
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 432 pages, £20

Four years ago, the BBC aired a deeply disturbing documentary called *My Nazi Legacy*. It followed the journey of Horst Wächter, the son of notorious Nazi leader Otto Wächter, as he visited the places in eastern Europe where his father had presided over the Holocaust. Throughout the documentary, Horst was presented with evidence of his father's crimes. And yet, while he was ready to denounce the Nazi system, he could never bring himself to admit his father's personal responsibility.

The presenter of that documentary was Philippe Sands, whose own family included people murdered by SS troops in the region governed by Otto Wächter. What made the film so engrossing was Sands' friendship with Horst. He was obviously disturbed by the astonishing levels of denial that Horst seemed capable of – but could not help liking him anyway. Both men were equally obsessed by the events of the past and, in different ways, equally unable to escape its shadow.

This book is the result of a further collaboration between the two. Horst wants to piece together everything he can about his father's story, and if possible to exonerate him. Sands, meanwhile, is equally determined to convince Horst of his father's guilt. What ensues is a kind of historical detective story, as the two retrace the story of Horst's parents from the moment they first met in 1929, through the events of the next 20 years.

The first part of the book describes the courtship and marriage between Horst's father and mother in the run-up to the Second World War. In the author's own words, it's a 'Nazi love story', pieced together using the diaries and letters that Horst's mother kept as mementos of her beloved husband. Were it not for the characters involved, there might be something quite charming about it – but given all that comes later, it is difficult to read without feeling slightly queasy.

The next part of the book describes their life together during the war, especially the time they spent in Lemberg (modern-day Lviv). For the Wächter family this was a time of "enormous joy". While Charlotte Wächter played piano, read books, and flirted with her husband's boss, Otto went about his business organising the mass-kidnapping of enslaved labourers, and transportation of Jewish people to the concentration camps.

The second half of the book concerns events after the war, when Otto was on the run. For four years he evaded Allied war crimes investigators by using the 'ratline' – a network of Nazi sympathisers who helped smuggle people to South America via Italy. He ended up in Rome, but died there, suddenly, from a mysterious illness.

> **While Horst denounced the Nazi system, he could never bring himself to admit his father's personal responsibility**

Horst, who is convinced that his father must have been poisoned, enlists Sands to help him learn the truth. However, Sands has another agenda. He indulges Horst, visits archives, interviews old Nazis, and makes numerous trips around Europe tracing Otto Wächter's footsteps. But he also seeks out documents and photos so incontrovertible that even Horst will surely be forced to acknowledge his father's guilt. It is this present-day drama, rather than the historical story, that makes this book so extraordinary. Readers will, much like the author, find themselves longing for Horst to open his eyes. That he finds this so difficult to do is simultaneously poignant and grotesque. **H**

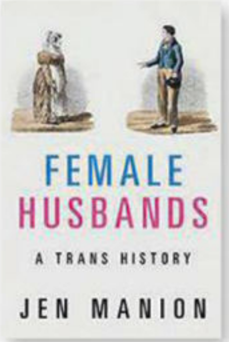
Keith Lowe is the author of *Prisoners of History: What Monuments to the Second World War Tell Us About Our History and Ourselves* (William Collins, 2020)

ORION PUBLISHING GROUP

Unwelcome inheritance
Otto Wächter pictured with his family. A new book investigates what happened to the Nazi leader as he went on the run from Allied war crimes investigators

GENDER

Ambiguous lives



Female Husbands: A Trans History
by Jen Manion
Cambridge University Press,
350 pages, £17.99

In the mid-18th century, a widely recognised category of a 'female husband' took shape – someone who was assigned female at birth and went on to marry a woman as a man.

It was Henry Fielding's 1746 story *The Female Husband; or the Surprising History of Mrs Mary, alias Mr George Hamilton* that propelled the category of the 'female husband' into wide circulation. But this fictionalised account took its cue from the earlier prosecution of Charles Hamilton, who was assigned female at birth but later became the husband of Mary Price. Manion's book examines the stories of the 'real' Hamilton and other individuals who had similar experiences.

Female Husbands: A Trans History steers away from a reconstruction of the feelings and intentions of female husbands and instead examines how their gender was perceived by others. Lurking behind these accounts was one principal question: 'What does it take to be a man?' In 18th and 19th-century Britain, cases such as that of Hamilton (a travelling medical salesperson) and Henry Stoake (a master builder) reveal concerns about the relationship between assigned sex and gender identity. In 19th-century America, female husbands such as George Wilson (a hat-maker) and John Smith (a tinsmith) triggered fears that a female husband might offer newly autonomous women an alternative to gender normative marriage.

Manion strives to remain faithful to these individuals, presenting them as 'ancestors' of contemporary transgender individuals. They refused to mould their gender around the sex they were given at birth and crafted their own gender identities. The transgender aspects of these individuals' lives were likely driven not by same-sex desire for women but by the security and freedom that masculinity might deliver. Manion's triumph in *Female Husbands* is to treat with an openhanded and flexible approach a series of lives that resisted categories and flourished through ambiguity.

Karen Harvey, professor of 18th century cultural history at the University of Birmingham

IRELAND

Marvellous miscellany

Ireland's Forgotten Past: A History of the Overlooked and Disremembered
by Turtle Bunbury
Thames & Hudson,
224 pages, £14.95

"To remember everything is a form of madness," remarks the schoolmaster Hugh O'Donnell in Brian Friel's 1980 play *Translations*. If so, then Turtle Bunbury may have concerns for his sanity. In *Ireland's Forgotten Past* he delivers a magnificently eclectic collection of 36 little histories of the "overlooked and disremembered" – objects and animals; people and places; and events, big and small. These are arranged chronologically. The first tells of a Devonian tetrapod, a metre-long creature, that some 385 million years ago left its footprints on Valentia Island, where they remain to this day. And the last concerns Herbert Remmel, a boy evacuated from Germany to Ireland in 1946, as part of Operation Shamrock, a Red Cross initiative to help children displaced by the war. In between are stories of high crosses and holy wells, a thoroughbred horse, the tailor who made a fortune outfitting Cromwell's army, spies, prostitutes, the Wicklow gold rush, and much else besides.

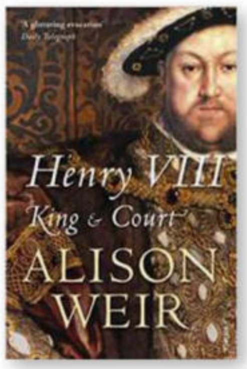
Other than chronology, this celebration of the forgotten lacks any rhyme or reason – except that the stories are more or less obscure, and that all inform and entertain. Bunbury is a skilled storyteller who carries his learning lightly and his readers with him. Helped by Joe McLaren's fine illustrations, readers of all ages will enjoy squinting through this stained-glass window of a book and marvelling at these weird and wonderful flickerings of the Irish past.

Critics might complain that lords and ladies eclipse the perennial overlooked – the poor – and, for sure, there is more than one gentleman's club here. But the sheer pleasure that Bunbury takes in spinning these tales would draw the acid from any pen. One suspects there will be a sequel from a prolific author for whom historical research is "an addictive jigsaw".

Breandán Mac Suibhne, senior research fellow at the National University of Ireland

THE CLASSIC BOOK

Tracy Borman on a biography that grounds Henry VIII in the daily realities of royal life



Henry VIII: King and Court
by Alison Weir
(first published 2001)

In 1517, the pope received a report from his emissary at the English court. The missive was so full of praise that its author almost ran out of superlatives. "The wealth and civilisation of the world are here," he enthused, declaring the "invincible king" excelled "all who ever wore a crown." This was exactly what Henry VIII had intended. He invested huge care, attention and expense in creating a court so magnificent that it would be the envy of the world. Although he revelled in all the delights that his palaces provided, this was about more than excess and enjoyment. The greater the court, the more invincible its king.

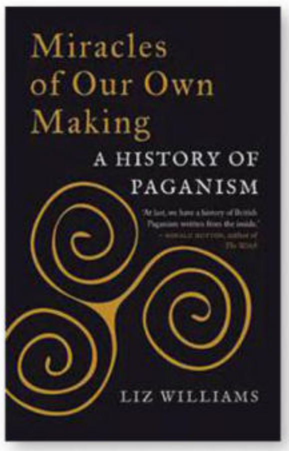
There have been numerous biographies of Henry VIII, but Weir's sets him firmly in the context of his court – which is exactly how he was seen by his contemporaries. Her research is as illuminating as it is extensive. This wonderful book is stuffed to the gills with fascinating details and vivid descriptions of court life – from the gargantuan quantities of food and the array of entertainments on offer, to the less glamorous aspects of life 'below stairs' and the strict codes of etiquette that governed the entire operation. Dominating it all is Henry himself. When viewed in his natural habitat, he emerges as altogether more nuanced, complex and human than the much-maligned caricature. A must-read for Tudor devotees everywhere.

Tracy Borman is the author of books including *Henry VIII and the Men Who Made Him* (Hodder, 2018)

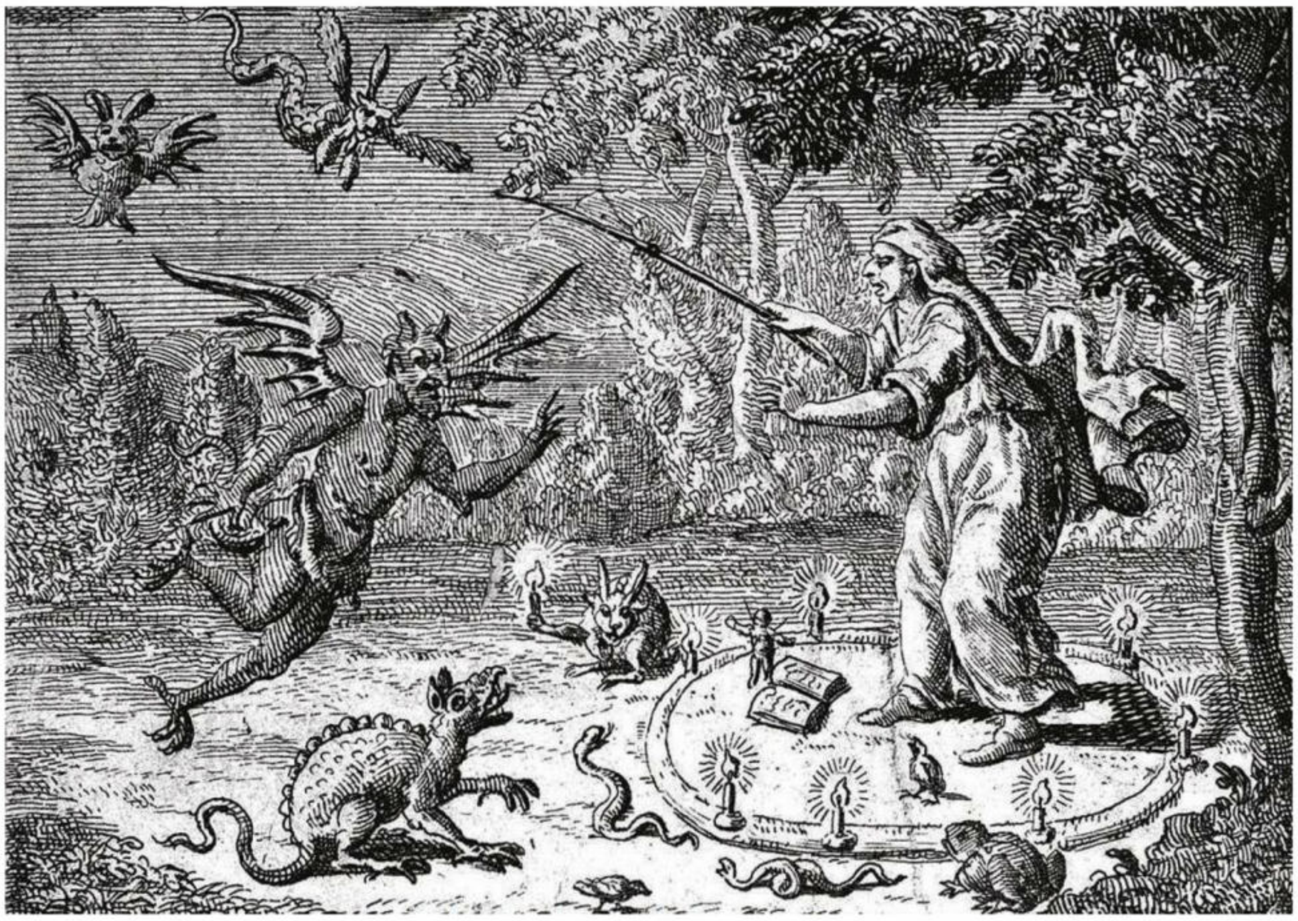
MAGICAL BELIEFS

Ages of enchantment

MARION GIBSON enjoys an insider's look at the history of paganism and magical beliefs that also offers up some practical advice for contemporary practitioners



Miracles of Our Own Making: A History of Paganism
by Liz Williams
Reaktion, 352 pages, £15.95



Toil and trouble A depiction of one of the 'witches of Warboys', who were tried in late 16th-century England. European witchcraft trials are one of the topics re-examined in Liz Williams' new history of paganism

WELLCOME IMAGES

Liz Williams' friendly and authoritative history of paganism gets quickly to the point: paganism is defined on the first page of the introduction as a religion that is outside the mainstream of recognised "world religions" and sometimes focuses on a broadly defined "nature worship". We could argue about that all day, but that is where Williams starts her journey. However, her book also attempts to deal with the wider field of magic. This is defined as a debatable power of influencing events by using mysterious forces – even more controversy lies down that path!

A book of only 350 pages that engages with both paganism and magic is setting itself a hugely ambitious task. But Williams does a good job, largely because she adopts a get-on-with-it approach. She acknowledges areas in which there are important controversies, but refuses to get bogged down in them. She openly points out gaps in historical knowledge, but doesn't allow them to distract her from giving a clear and accessible account of what is known and why. And she faces squarely the myths that have grown up around particular paganisms of the past and present: the 'burning' of British witches (most were not burned but hanged), the idea of an easily identified and universal 'horned god', and various other dubious claims about hidden masters of wisdom and universal ancient goddesses are all dealt with fairly and trenchantly.

The book is deeply indebted to Ronald Hutton's magisterial histories of ancient British paganism, Druidry and witchcraft, and Williams points readers to his books frequently, rightly recognising that Hutton has already exploded some of the myths that interest her. But she brings her own lively curiosity and frame of reference to the work – one of the book's strengths is that it is so inviting. Readers who are interested to know more about Wicca or Druidry will find lots to think about, and because Williams practises paganism herself there is nothing awkward about her account of it. The book also isn't sniffy about popular culture and instead goes straight to the kind of sources that all sorts of readers will know: TV shows, novels and websites. These are woven into a very well-informed and pacy history that is structured century by century but also has recurring themes and ideas that pull the reader along. Chapters deal with ancient origins, 'Saxons and Vikings', the Middle Ages and early modern witchcraft trials, Renaissance ceremonial magic, Georgian and Victorian reinventions and contemporary paganism.

> **"Readers interested to know more about Wicca or Druidry will find lots to think about, especially as the author practises paganism herself"**

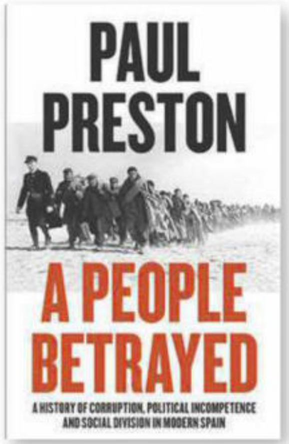
In an appendix, Williams gives the reader the opportunity to practise some basic pagan activities. Although some readers won't want this, others will find it exciting. This is accompanied by a second sharp and useful appendix that incorporates some good advice (don't rip off other people's cultural heritage, don't imagine magic can fix everything). It's an unusual end to a volume of history, and although it won't be a good fit for every reader, it means the book reaches a wider audience and answers the sort of questions that many readers will genuinely have, which is surely a good thing. History should engage with readers intelligently, accurately and respectfully. This is an inventive, authoritative and lively history of paganism and magic, with a practical twist. It deserves a wide readership. H

Marion Gibson is professor of magical literature at the University of Exeter and the author of *Witchcraft: The Basics* (Routledge, 2018)

SPAIN

Rotten at the core

ALEJANDRO QUIROGA commends an authoritative account of how corruption infiltrated 20th-century Spanish society



A People Betrayed: A History of Corruption, Political Incompetence and Social Division in Modern Spain
by Paul Preston
William Collins, 768 pages, £30

For more than four decades, Paul Preston has produced voluminous and incisive work on the history of Spain. As the leading British historian in the field, he has written on the Second Republic (1931–36), the Civil War (1936–39), the Franco dictatorship and the late 1970s transition to democracy. His latest contribution to the analysis of Spain's past is a comprehensive political and social history spanning from the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in 1874 to the present day.

Preston's main thesis is that corruption and political incompetence have had a corrosive effect on Spain's political and social cohesion since the late 19th century. This argument could be seen to strengthen the stereotypical British view of Spaniards as naturally inclined to corruption and authoritarianism. The book does not, however, adopt a clichéd view of a benighted Spain but instead explores how the dishonesty and ineptitude of political, military and ecclesiastical elites led to different forms of social violence and discrimination. Nor does Preston suggest that Spain is exceptional in terms of governmental incompetence and corruption. As he states in the preface, recent years have also witnessed "lies, governmental ineptitude and corruption" in Britain.

The book opens with an examination of the myths of Spanish national character, focusing on the exotic, semi-oriental stereotypes of passion, violence and eroticism promoted by European romantics in the 19th century. Critical of these conventional representations, Preston provides more mundane factors to explain the connections between social inequality and violence, political incompetence and corruption. A tradition of mutual mistrust between the army and civil society, the lack of a state apparatus popularly accepted as legitimate, and the perpetuation of old forms of politics, social influence and patronage are some of the elements that regularly come out in the author's analysis. Unsurprisingly, the dictatorships of General Primo de Rivera (1923–30) and General Franco (1939–75) appear as the most corrupt, violent and unequal periods of Spanish history, when military regimes allegedly established to 'save' the nation ended up defending the interests of fairly small segments of society.

The author acknowledges that the gap between the people and the elites was reduced during the first years of the Second Republic and the socialist governments of the 1980s and 1990s, yet Preston also traces the continuity of corrupt, violent and ineffectual practices in these democratic regimes. It is particularly interesting to read Preston's analysis of 21st-century Spain, a terrain he has previously seldom explored. The title of the last chapter, 'The Triumph of Corruption and Incompetence, 2004–2018', is unambiguous. Here, again, the author thoroughly investigates dozens of recent corruption cases, involving conservatives, socialists, Catalan nationalists, bankers, policemen and the royal family.

> **"Military regimes allegedly established to 'save' the nation ended up defending the interests of fairly small segments of society"**

This is a fantastic, well-researched and superbly written history book that brings to light the all too contemporary issue of political elites' dishonesty and ineptitude.

Alejandro Quiroga is reader in Spanish history at Newcastle University

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FROM FACT TO FICTION

Cold case

Lindsey Davis on the latest novel in her crime series set on the mean streets of ancient Rome

What inspired you to embark on two major series of crime books set in ancient Rome?
What could be better than life in colourful streets, with the sun shining? The people have wine, streetfood, attractive personalities and rampant ambition. But criminal impulses know no historic boundaries, so then there are pathological serial killers. Up against them are the forces of law and order, which in my Rome means the overworked, underfunded fire brigade bedevilled by an official 'consultant' who knows nothing. The Senate contains rich inadequates, collectables are mainly faked and the emperor is barmy. It's all so familiar you have to love it.

Where does this latest instalment take your main character, investigator Flavia Albia?
"Don't go to the Grove", Albia is told – so of course she heads straight across the Tiber to the very Sacred Grove in Caesar's Gardens that she has been warned to avoid. I explore this intriguing area on the right bank, occupied in Roman times by refugees, outsiders and sailors at a massive flooded amphitheatre. Albia explores too, especially after someone jumps out of the undergrowth and kills an innocent woman. Albia learns that this has happened before, but she is on the case, armed with a determination to right these ancient wrongs.

What new perspectives does Flavia Albia offer on ancient Rome?
First of all, she's an outsider (from Britannia), so she views society and traditions, and the city itself, more sceptically than her father (who was the focus of my earlier series of novels), who satirised his world but was at heart a typical traditional Roman. And with Albia and her husband, Tiberius, I am exploring plebeian work and family life in more detail than I've done before.

The Grove of the Caesars
by Lindsey Davis
(Hodder, 416 pages, £20)

Out on the town
Babylon Berlin recreates the glitz and glamour of the German capital between the wars, including the legendary Moka Efti nightclub, which hosted raucous cabaret performances

FRÉDÉRIC BATIER, ARD/–SKY

ENCOUNTERS

DIARY: LISTEN / WATCH / VIEW ONLINE

By **Jon Bauckham** and **Jonathan Wright**

WATCH

Uneasy times

Between the world wars, Germany was a place where extreme political ideas and economic turmoil fed into new and subversive forms of artistic expression. This febrile atmosphere is captured magnificently in *Babylon Berlin*, the critically acclaimed German drama set during the Weimar Republic, now in its third season.

This latest series recently aired on Sky Atlantic and has now been released on DVD and digitally. It picks up the story in 1929, in the weeks leading up to the Wall Street Crash. We find Inspector Gereon Rath (Volker Bruch), a Berlin-based policeman left traumatised by his experiences in the First World War, and sidekick Charlotte Ritter (Liv Lisa Fries) investigating the violent death of a silent film actress.

If the plot sounds like a police procedural, that's because the show is based on a series of crime novels by Volker Kutscher. But it's equally a multi-stranded drama exploring the rise of Nazism in the jazz age. *Babylon Berlin* is the most expensive TV series in German history and, crucially, one where every frame suggests the money has been spent wisely. Plus, with many of us staying inside, has there ever been a better time to watch a boxset?

Babylon Berlin

Season 3 and a boxset of seasons 1–3 are available on DVD from Acorn Media International

French actor Eva Green stars as brothel keeper Lydia Wells

WATCH

Gold fever

In the 1860s, New Zealand's South Island was the scene of a gold rush. Its west coast, previously little visited by Europeans, boomed, as did the ramshackle settlement of Hokitika.

This tumultuous period forms the backdrop to Eleanor Catton's 2013 Man Booker Prize-winning novel, *The Luminaries*, now adapted for TV by Catton herself. At the story's centre lies rebellious émigré Anna Wetherell (Eve Hewson). In New Zealand, she encounters Emery Staines (Himesh Patel) and the two are drawn to each other. Expect a tale of love, murder and revenge with an international cast, including Eva Green (*Casino Royale*) as a ruthless brothel-keeper, Lydia Wells.

The Luminaries
BBC Two / Due to air in May

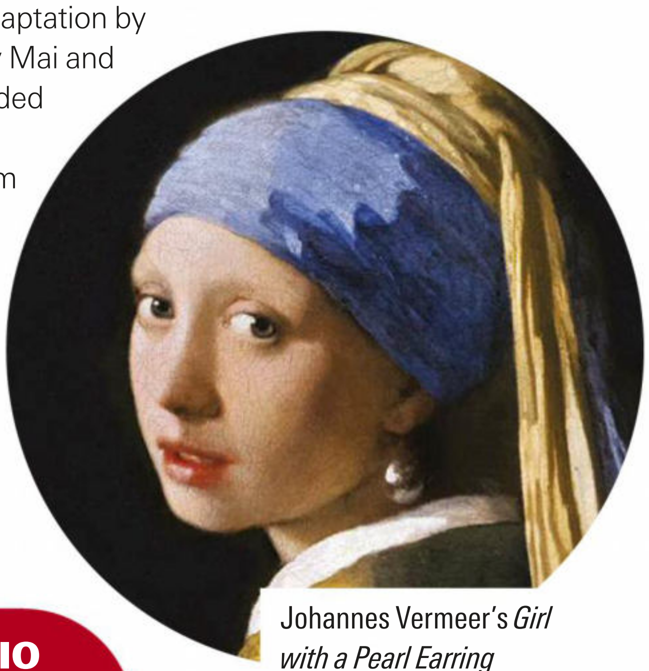
LISTEN

Definitive gaze

As a 19-year-old, the author Tracy Chevalier bought a poster of Johannes Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (c1665), a haunting image of an unknown model looking over her shoulder. Over subsequent years she put the poster up wherever she lived. It eventually inspired her 1999 bestselling novel, which imagined the life of Vermeer's model, a 16-year-old servant, Griet. It's a slight story, yet it has much to say about class.

A new weekday radio adaptation by Ayeesha Menon stars Libby Mai and Khalid Abdalla. It was recorded on location at Keats House, Hampstead and features Tim Motz performing specially recorded 17th-century Dutch harpsichord music.

Girl with a Pearl Earring
BBC Radio 4 / Due to air on weekdays from 11 May



Johannes Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* inspired Tracy Chevalier's bestselling novel

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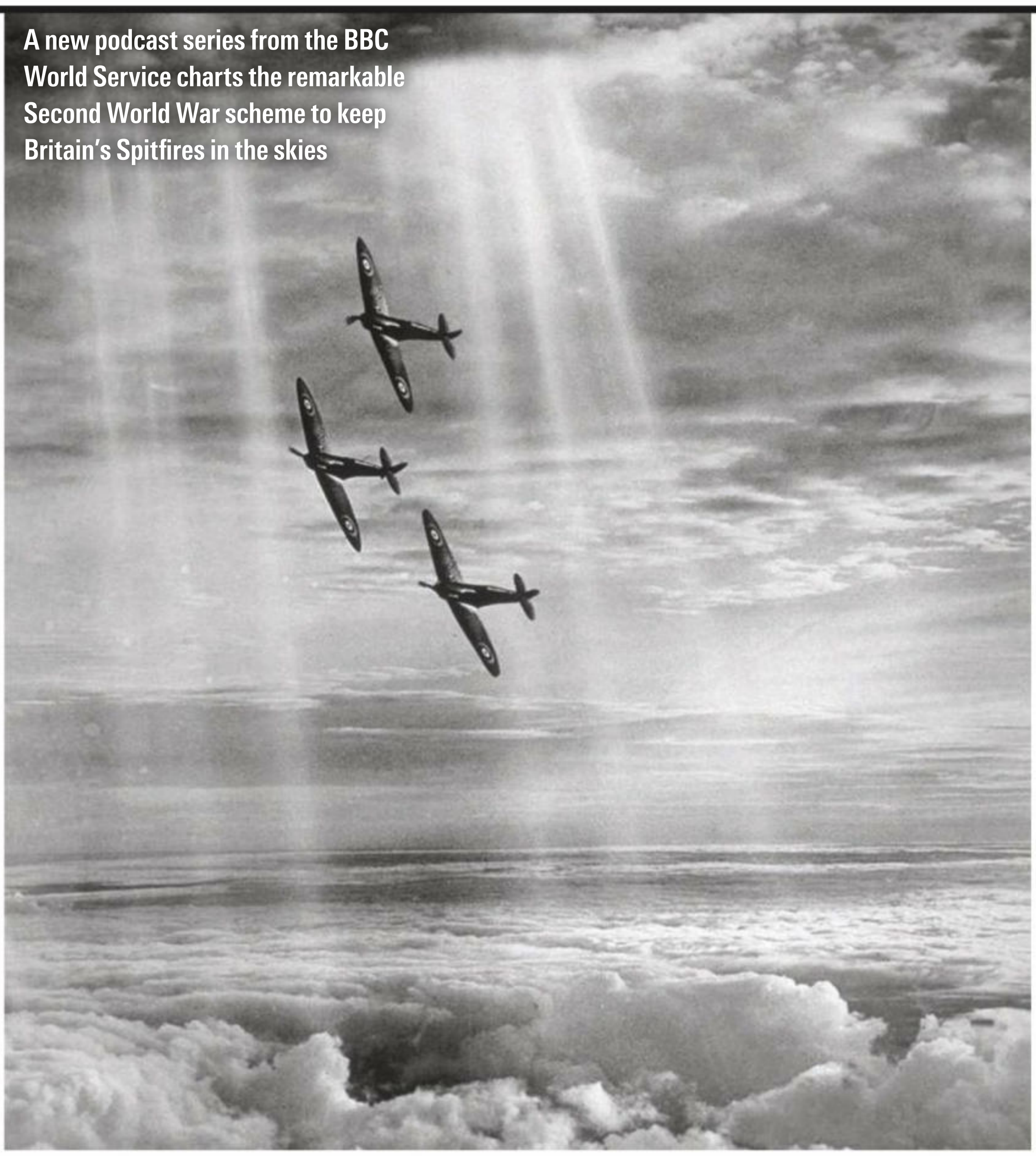


A new podcast series from the BBC World Service charts the remarkable Second World War scheme to keep Britain's Spitfires in the skies

LISTEN

Rising from the ashes

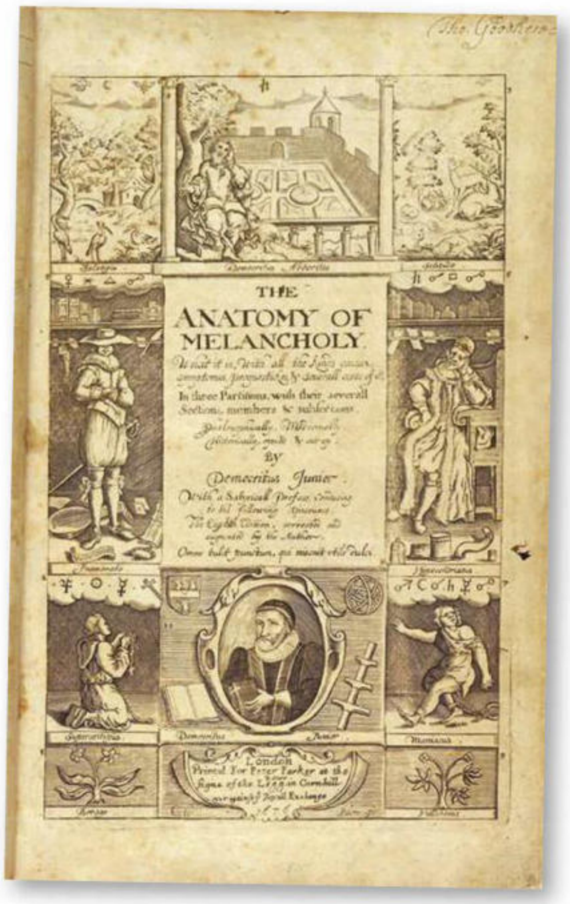
As the Battle of Britain raged in September 1940, the Luftwaffe unleashed two devastating daylight attacks against the Supermarine aviation factory at Woolston in Southampton. The works, which had been operating at full capacity churning out Spitfires to take on Messerschmitt 109s in dogfights over England, were seriously damaged with the loss of more than 100 lives.

This should have been a national disaster, both in terms of Britain's fighting capability, and morale – so crucial had the Spitfire become as a symbol of resistance. Instead, an extraordinary scheme was enacted. Lord Beaverbrook, the minister of aircraft production, insisted that the production continue locally, and within hours workers began moving enormous machine tools to car workshops, bus depots and even a laundry.

Across Southampton and the south of England, often unskilled staff began to make individual Spitfire parts, which were then assembled at airfields prior to the planes being tested. It was a piece of improvisation that broke every rule of industrial design and production. It was also, as a new 10-part podcast made by BBC World Service highlights, the only way to get the RAF the planes it needed to stave off the threat of invasion.

Spitfire!
Available to download from 8 May via BBC Sounds

ALAMY/ANNA LENIHAN - BBC PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES



THE
ANATOMY OF
MELANCHOLY

In three Partitions, with their severall
Sections, members & subsections.

By
Democritus Junior

London

The Frontispiece from an edition of Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, which was republished numerous times throughout the 17th century

LISTEN

Sadness defined

It's four centuries since Oxford scholar Robert Burton (1577–1640) wrote his *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Here was an attempt to grapple with sadness, its causes, symptoms and treatments, long before depression had become a word describing a major global issue. Of his reasons for writing, Burton noted that it helped him to keep busy in order to stave off his own melancholy.

Writer Amy Liptrot, whose acclaimed memoir *The Outrun* documents her own recovery from addiction, looks back at Burton's text to see if it still has lessons for us today. Each of the weekday shows picks up a specific theme from Burton's work, drawing parallels, for example, between melancholy as sometimes being the result of "an hereditary cause" and today's ideas about genetics.

Liptrot's guests include Monty Don, who has publicly spoken about his battles with depression, a survivor of the Manchester Arena attack and Lewis Wolpert, a pioneering cell biologist and author of *Malignant Sadness: The Anatomy of Depression*.

"It's been fascinating to compare the cutting edge of today's psychiatry and people's 21st-century experiences of depression with the ideas of Robert Burton," Liptrot says. "It's often amazing how relevant and prescient he was."

The New Anatomy of Melancholy
BBC Radio 4 / Due to air in May

WELLCOME IMAGES/ALAMY/BBC

HISTORY ON THE BOX

"Cecil Beaton essentially did the same job for our queen as Hans Holbein the Younger did for Henry VIII"

LUCY WORSLEY, chief curator at Historic Royal Palaces, tells us about her forthcoming documentary for BBC Four, which explores the ways that the British monarchy has used photography since the reign of Queen Victoria

What story does the documentary set out to tell?
The programme makes the case that it's photography that has been essential to the British monarchy's extraordinary survival over the last 200 years. Creating and releasing images has created a sense of connection and indeed affection between sovereigns and people.

How aware were the royals of the potential of photography from its earliest days?
Queen Victoria and especially Prince Albert were 'early adopters'. They even had their own dark room at Windsor Castle. At first the images they had taken were for private consumption, but soon the pictures started to slip out into the world, and they began to realise that they'd stumbled upon a propaganda tool for the monarchy that was more powerful than anything else invented in the 19th century.

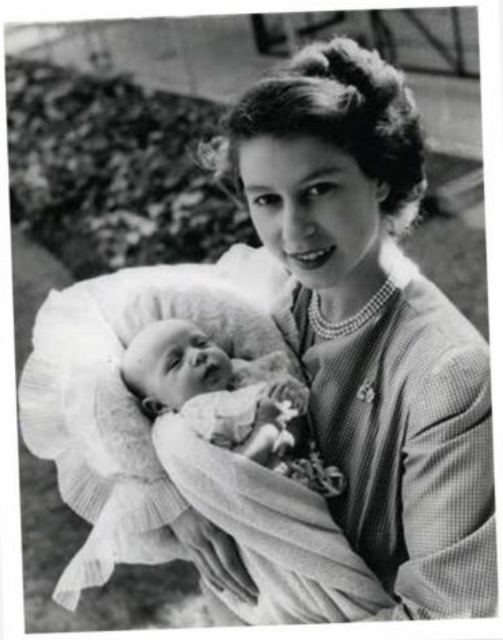
You can see that particularly through the most popular photographs of Victoria. At first, she's shown in a very informal and 'unqueenly' way. Later, when she became a widow, the hundreds of thousands of images of her circulating across the world in the form of commercially available *cartes de vistes* kept her alive in people's memories even after she withdrew from public life to mourn. And then, finally, when she became empress of India, she appeared in a new, more splendid style. It's the story of a growing confidence in a new art form.

Why were royal photographer Cecil Beaton's images of Elizabeth II so important?
Beaton (1904–80) was a magician when it came to royal photography. He'd honed his skills on Hollywood stars, and he was photographing the queen, he drew on the historical tradition of painted royal portraiture to enhance her authority. Yet he also gave her a very 20th-century sense of glamour. He essentially did the same job for our queen as Hans Holbein the Younger did for Henry VIII.

Are there any images that tell you how royal attitudes and/or our attitudes to the royals are changing?
When the Duke of Cambridge appeared on the cover of [gay lifestyle magazine] *Attitude*, it created the same kind of reaction as when his mother, Princess Diana, was photographed shaking hands with someone who was HIV positive, or walking across a field of land-mines.

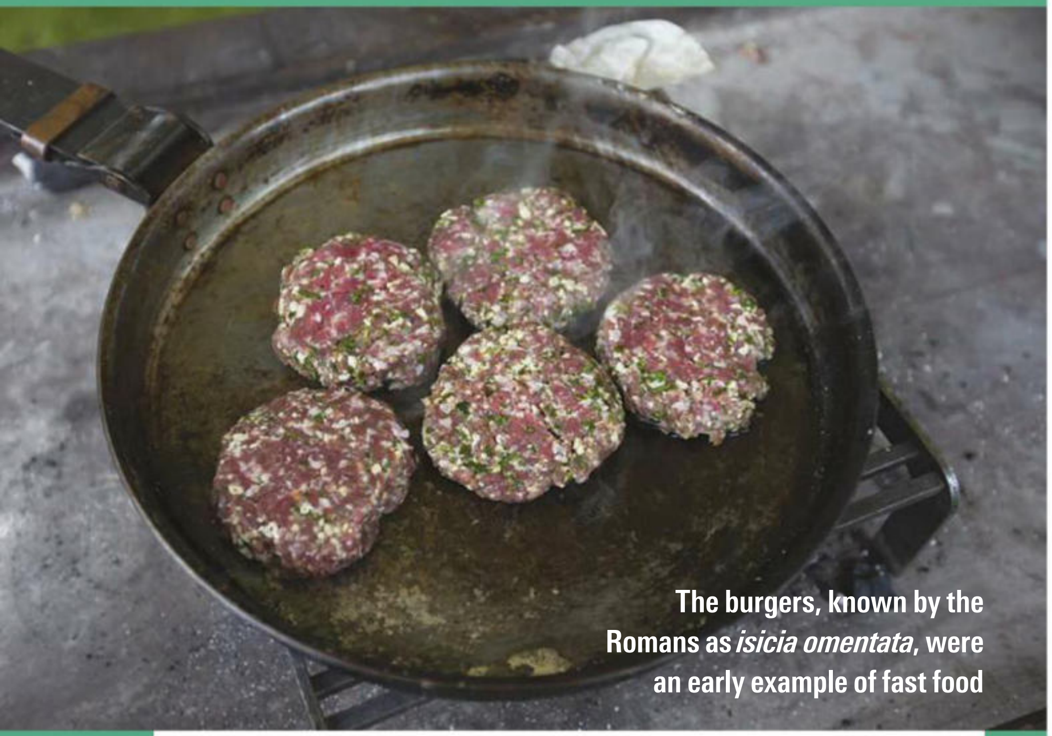
Even in the early 20th century, George V and Queen Mary realised that being photographed visiting coal mines or normal people's houses would be good both for their own image, and that of the morale of Britain. **H**

Lucy Worsley's new documentary on royal photography (title still to be confirmed) is due to air on BBC Four in May. It accompanies an exhibition, Life Through a Royal Lens, which is due to open at Kensington Palace later in 2020



Cecil Beaton's image of Elizabeth II with the newborn Princess Anne, 1950

HISTORY COOKBOOK



The burgers, known by the Romans as *isicia omentata*, were an early example of fast food

TASTE

Ancient Roman burgers

The hamburger is often thought of as a relatively recent innovation – a treat associated with summer barbecues, football terraces or a late-night visit to the Golden Arches.

However, historical evidence suggests that our forebears were flipping burgers as early as 1,500 years ago. Inside the ancient Roman cookbook *Apicius*, compiled by an anonymous author in the fourth or fifth century AD, you'll find a dish named *isicia omentata*, which sounds remarkably similar to a recipe for a slightly-upmarket beef burger.

Like their modern descendants, these patties would have been sold at fast food establishments across the Roman empire known as *thermopolia*, perhaps as a lunchtime treat.

This particular take on the recipe will make a total of four burgers. There's also the option of wrapping each patty in caul fat for an extra meaty flavour.

Difficulty: 3/10 **Time:** 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS

500g minced beef
60g pine kernels
3 tsp garum or other fish-based sauce
Ground pepper
Handful of fresh coriander
Juniper berries
Caul fat (optional)
Flat bread buns (to serve)

METHOD

Grind up the pine kernels and then mix in a bowl with the minced beef and all other ingredients.

Shape the mixture into four individual burger patties and wrap each one in caul fat if preferred.

Fry the patties with oil in a pan on a medium heat for 10 minutes, turning regularly, before serving plain or in a bun.

Recipe courtesy of Richard Moss at museumcrush.org

VIEW ONLINE

Visions of a life

With much of the globe on lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic, gallery-goers are having to come up with more creative ways to get their culture fix. Luckily, Google's Arts & Culture platform enables visitors to explore highlights from some of the world's leading institutions – all completely free of charge and from the comfort of home.

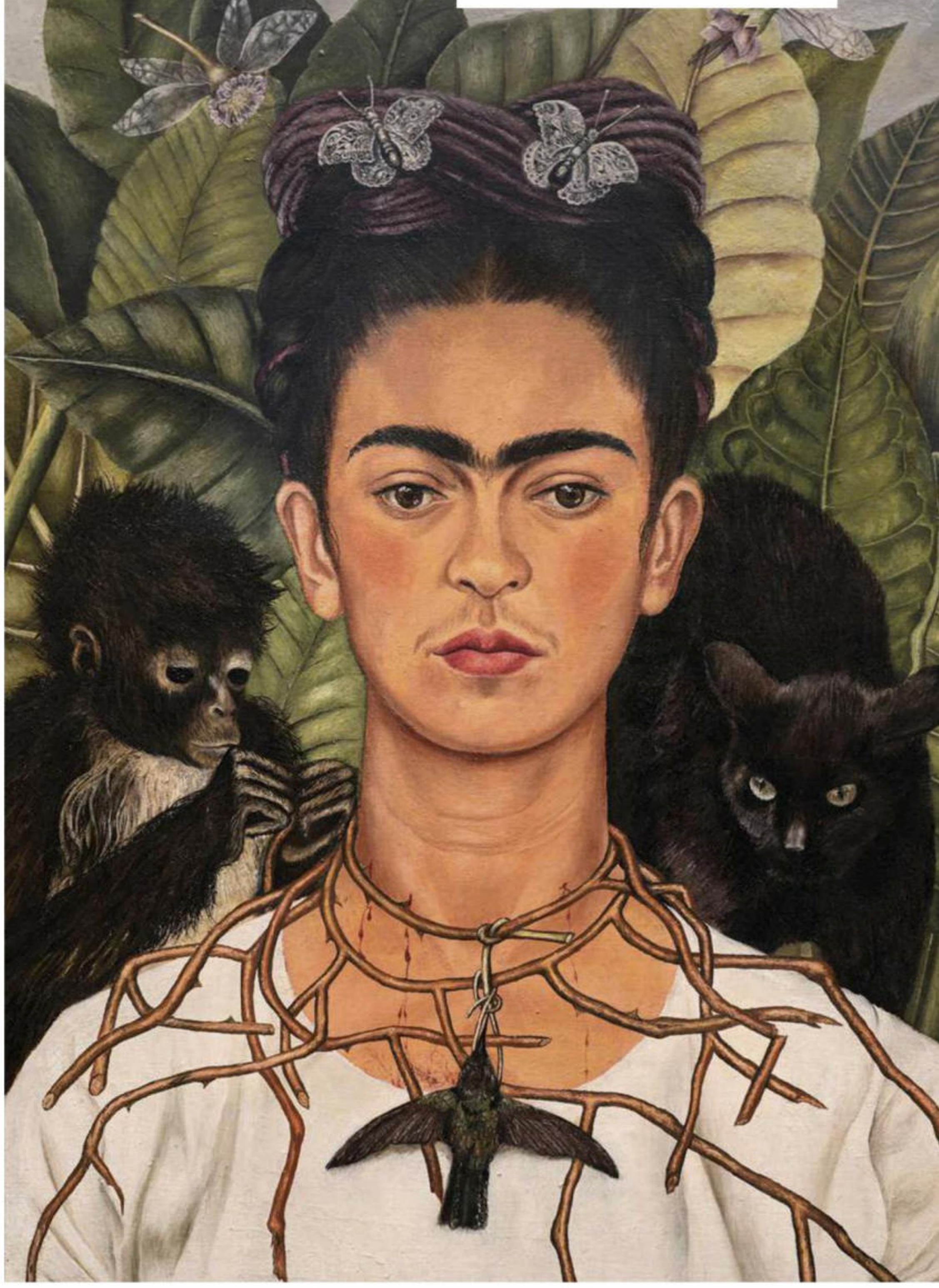
Among the new virtual exhibitions on display is Faces of Frida, which showcases hundreds of paintings and drawings produced by the pioneering Mexican surrealist Frida Kahlo (1907–54).

Featuring items from 33 museums and galleries, viewers can discover the hidden meanings behind Kahlo's masterpieces and examine intimate letters that shed further light on the personal triumphs and tragedies that drove her creativity. H

Faces of Frida

Available to explore for free at *artsandculture.google.com/project/frida-kahlo*

Kahlo's *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird* (1940) is one of the many canvases included in the interactive virtual exhibition



ALAMY/DAVE THOMPSON–ROUTE ONEPHOTOGRAPHY–ENGLISH HERITAGE

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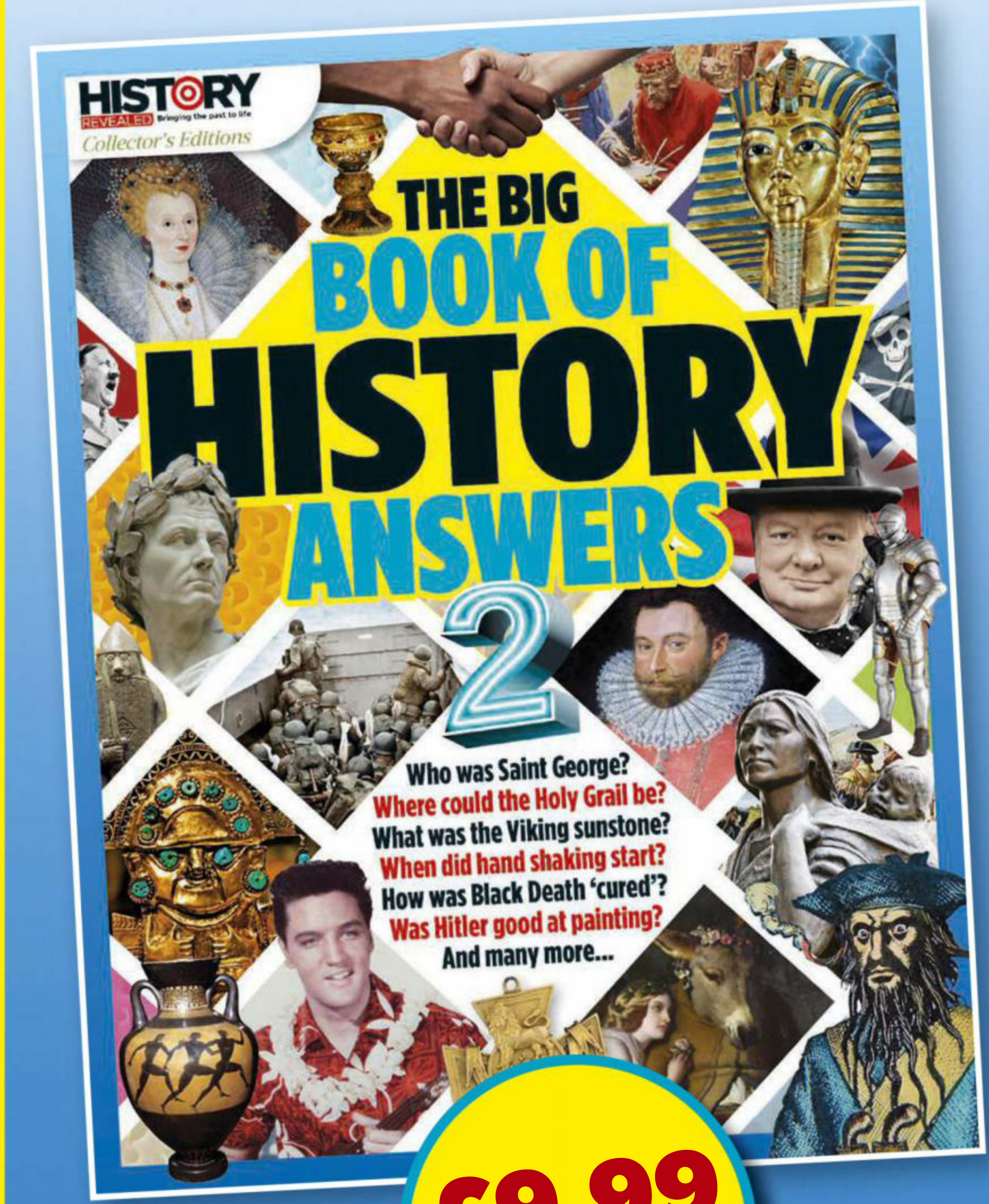

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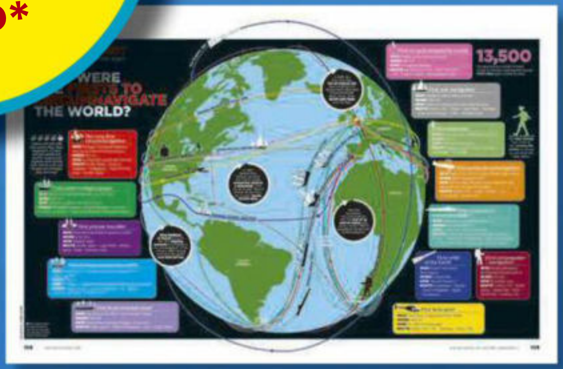

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berkeley-castle.com // info@berkeley-castle.com

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tamworthcastle.co.uk // 01827 709618

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Raby Castle in Co Durham is one of the most impressive castles in England. Built in the 14th Century by the Nevill family, the Castle was the home of Cicely Nevill, mother of Kings Edward IV and Richard III. The Coach House is complete with the original Coach collection, there are picturesque Walled Gardens and 200 acres of Parkland with deer.

raby.co.uk // 01833 660202 // admin@raby.co.uk

UNDISCOVERED *Museums*

Take a look at a selection of Undiscovered Museums to inspire you for future days out.

FELIXSTOWE MUSEUM

Housed in the last remaining Submarine Mining Establishment building in UK, the museum brings to life the local social and military history of the area. Fourteen display areas are devoted to different themes. Special activities for children; tearoom and gift shop on site. Well-behaved dogs welcome!

felixstowemuseum.org | 01394 674355

CIVIL DEFEN
AMBULANCE

NATIONAL EMERGENCY SERVICES MUSEUM

Based in a Victorian police, fire and ambulance station in Sheffield, our museum showcases over 250 years of emergency services history during peace and war. Explore three floors of vintage vehicles and dynamic displays, and enjoy special events throughout the year that give our visitors the chance to get up close and personal with history.

0114 2491 999 | visitnesm.org.uk

BRIGHTON TOY AND MODEL MUSEUM

Step back in time to marvel at the wonderful toys from the golden age of toy making at Brighton Toy and Model Museum. Housing one of the world's finest collections of vintage model trains and toys – preserving childhood memories, nostalgia and social history. With over 10,000 items to look at there's something for the whole family to enjoy!

01273 749494 | brightontoymuseum.co.uk

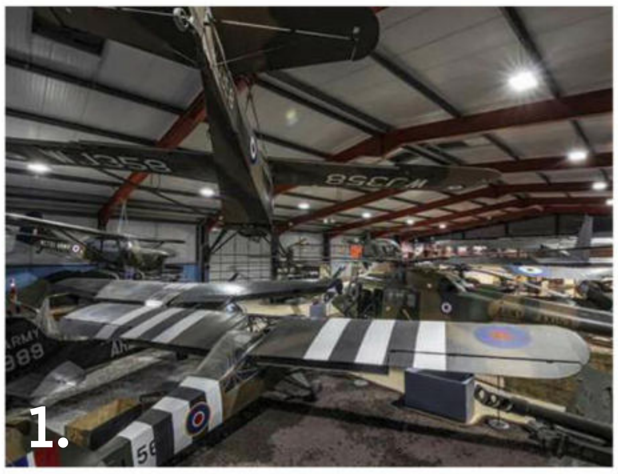
THE HERSCHEL MUSEUM OF ASTRONOMY

This award-winning museum in Bath is dedicated to the many achievements of brother and sister William and Caroline Herschel who were distinguished astronomers as well as talented musicians. It was from this house, using a telescope of his own design that William discovered the planet Uranus in 1781.

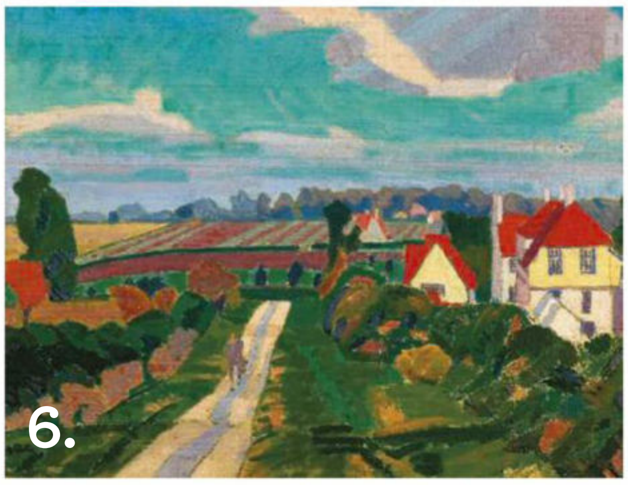
01225 446 865 | herschelmuseum.org.uk

Heritage Collection

Get inspired for future heritage outings



2.
THE HOUSEHOLD Cavalry MUSEUM



1. ARMY FLYING MUSEUM

Get up close and personal with the full history of Army aviation, from man-lifting kites to modern attack helicopters in a day out guaranteed to thrill the whole family.

armyflying.com | 01264 781086

2. HOUSEHOLD CAVALRY MUSEUM

Look into the secret world of HM The Queen's mounted bodyguard through our Stable Gallery window and learn what it takes to protect the Monarch at home and abroad.

householdcavalrymuseum.co.uk | 020 7930 3070

3. BUTSER ANCIENT FARM

A unique experimental archaeological site in the beautiful South Downs. Step inside reconstructed buildings from the Stone Age, Iron Age, Roman and Saxon periods and learn traditional skills with workshops and events.

butserancientfarm.co.uk | 02392 598838

4. FROGMORE PAPER MILL

'A real hidden gem'. A unique visitor experience in the world's oldest mechanised paper mill, the birthplace of paper's industrial revolution. Learn about the history of paper, make your own sheet, see our 110 year old machine making paper.

thepapertrail.org.uk | 01442 234600

5. NEWARK TOWN HALL MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

Fascinating architectural gem designed in 1774 by John Carr. A working Town Hall that also contains a museum within its beautiful Georgian rooms. Please contact by phone on 01636 680333.

newarktownhallmuseum.co.uk

6. NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE MUSEUM

When life returns to normal, bring all the family to visit this award-winning new museum in Hitchin. Lots to see and do, great café, entrance free.

northhertsmuseum.org | 01462 474554

7. WORDSWORTH GRASMERE

Uncover Wordsworth's radical and creative life story. Be inspired by his words in the very place they were written.

wordsworth.org.uk

8. CROMFORD MILLS

Discover Cromford Mills - nestled in the beautifully scenic Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. Built in 1771 to house the first water-powered cotton spinning mill, history comes to life at the birthplace of the modern factory system.

01629 823256 | cromfordmills.org.uk

9. ANAESTHESIA HERITAGE CENTRE

A unique medical science museum devoted to the history of anaesthesia, resuscitation and pain relief. The new exhibition Comfortably Numb explores regional and local anaesthesia.

anaesthetists.org/Home/Heritage-centre

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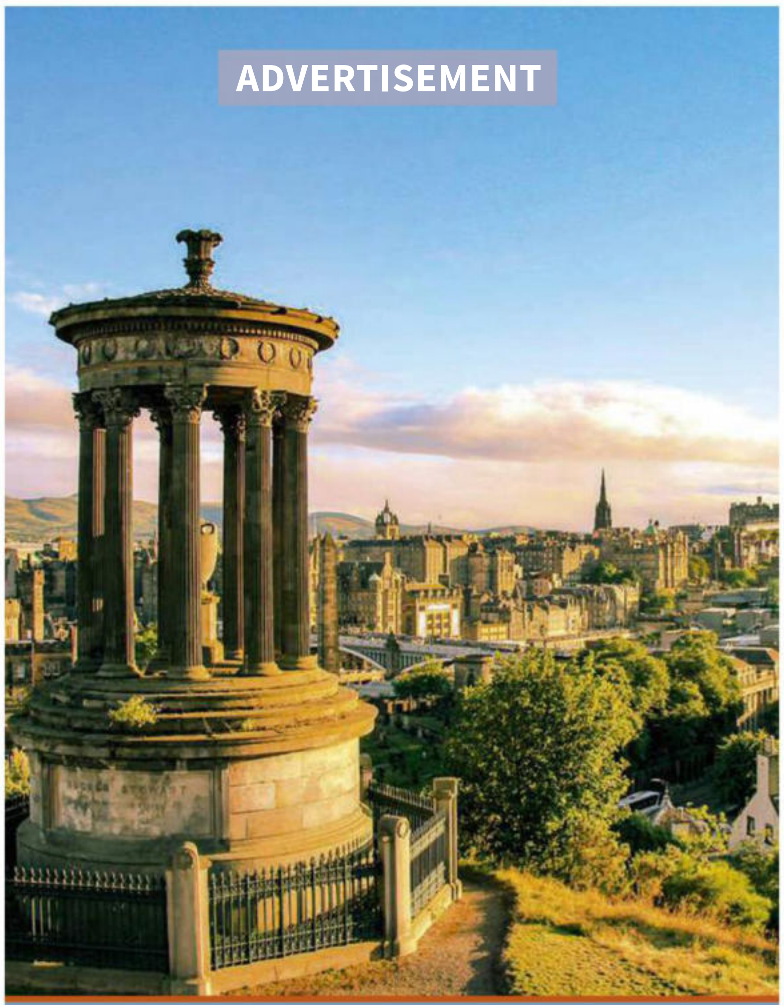
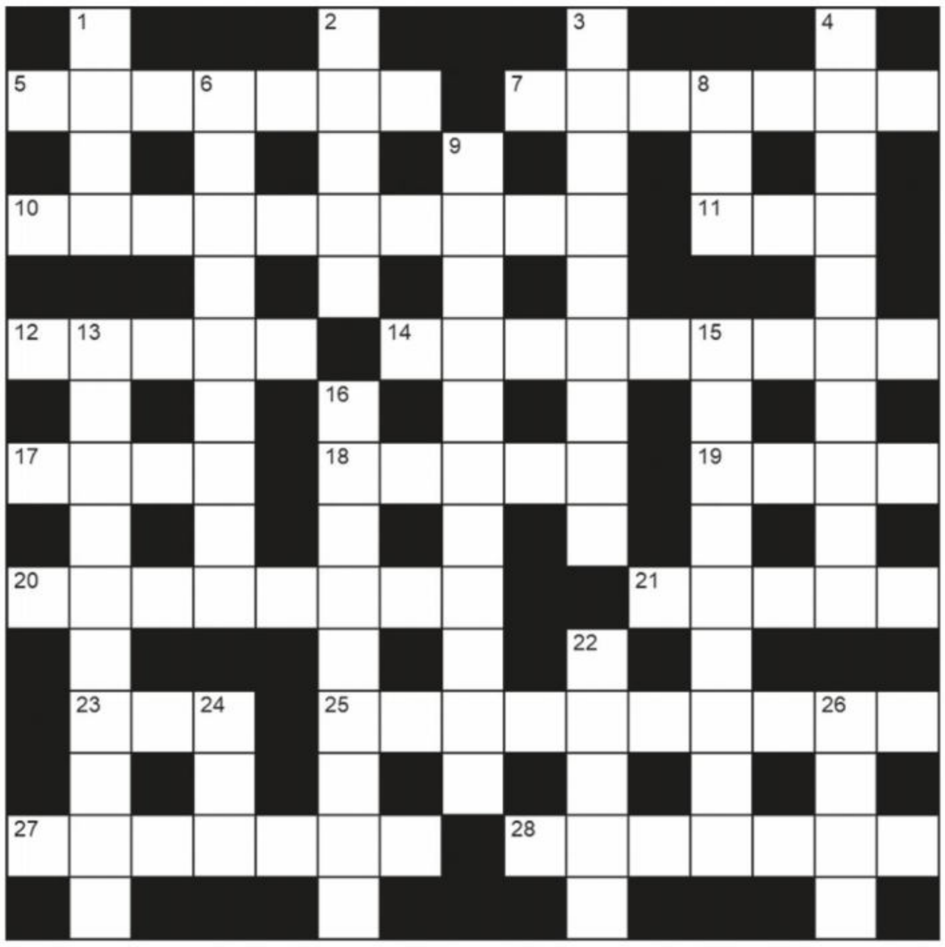


For more ideas to help plan your historic day out check out the Directory at

www.historyextra.com/directory

PRIZE CROSSWORD



Across

5 Lise, Austrian-born physicist, a key researcher into nuclear fission, though she did not share the 1944 Nobel prize for its discovery (7)

7 US Civil War general, after whom a Second World War tank was named (7)

10 British historian and author – her first published work was the 1989 book *Britain's Royal Families* (6,4)

11 Signal that replaced 'CQD', which came into force from 1908 (3)

12 Jimmy ____, the US union leader who disappeared mysteriously in 1975, possibly killed by the Mafia (5)

14 Having persuaded Claudius to adopt her son, Nero, as heir to the throne, she was a powerful influence in Nero's early reign (9)

17 Fourth prime minister of the state of Israel, of which she was a founder (4)

18 Sir John ____, a prominent figure in the parliamentarian cause against Charles I; he died while imprisoned in the Tower (5)

19 He was Roman emperor for only a few months, until his suicide in AD 69 (4)

20 Project ____ ____, at a US airforce base in Dayton, Ohio, listed thousands of reports of UFO sightings between 1952 and 1969 (4,4)

21 Derogatory name for a Swiss (especially) banker, from a phrase coined by Labour politician George Brown in 1964 (5)

23/1 down President Roosevelt's domestic programme to combat the effects of the Depression (3,4)

25 John, 17th-century naturalist whose collection (after being acquired by Elias Ashmole) formed the core of Oxford's Ashmolean Museum (10)

27 In Greek mythology, the beheader of the Gorgon Medusa (7)

28 Surname of 19th-century Viennese composer and his more famous elder son, known as the 'Waltz King' (7)

Down

1 See 23 across

2 ___ Lind, celebrated 19th-century soprano, known as the 'Swedish Nightingale' (5)

3 Members of the working-class movement named after the bill drafted by London radical William Lovett in May 1838 (9)

4 Thomas ___, English Benedictine monk whose chronicles are an important source for the reigns of Richard II, Henry IV and Henry V (10)

6 For example, the British naval fleet assembled in 1982 after the Argentinian invasion of the Falkland Islands (4,5)

8 Ethiopian princely title, applied to Haile Selassie I when he was heir apparent to the throne (3)

9 Warrior-ruler of the 12th/13th century, who consolidated Mongolia and extended his empire to the Adriatic (7,4)

13 Name applied to an Australian drover who took stock over long distances, and opened up new land (10)

15 Ancient land of sea traders, mostly covering modern-day Lebanon (9)

16 Roman fort, built around AD 77 near the present town of Caernarfon (9)

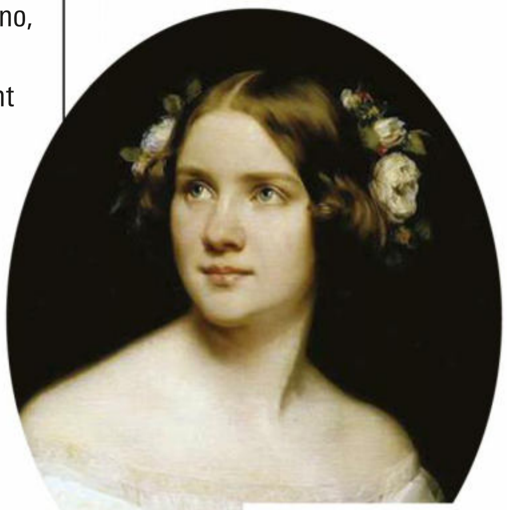
22 A people who spread over much of Europe around the first millennium BC (5)

24 Shortened name of a British business established in 1792, becoming a major retailer after opening its first bookstall at Euston Station in 1848 (3)

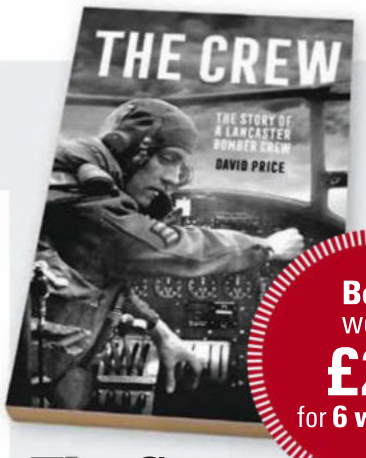
26 John ___, 18/19th-century architect who developed Regent's Park and remodelled Brighton Pavilion (4)

……

Compiled by **Eddie James**



Who was this singer, known as the 'Swedish Nightingale'? *(see 2 down)*



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By David Price

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HOW TO ENTER

● Open to residents of the UK (inc Channel Islands). Post entries to ***BBC History Magazine*, May 2020 Crossword, PO Box 501, Leicester LE94 0AA** or email them to ***may2020@historycomps.co.uk*** by 5pm on **13 May 2020**. ● Entrants must supply full name, address and phone number. The winners will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. Winners' names will appear in the July 2020 issue. By entering, participants agree to be bound by the terms and conditions shown in full in the box below. Immediate Media Company Ltd (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) will use personal details in accordance with the Immediate Privacy Policy at *immediatemedia.co.uk/privacy-policy/privacy/* ● Immediate Media Company Ltd (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) would love to send you newsletters, together with special offers and other promotions. If you would not like to receive these, please write 'NO INFO' on your entry. ● Branded BBC titles are licensed from or published jointly with BBC Studios (the commercial arm of the BBC). Please tick here ☐ if you'd like to receive regular newsletters, special offers and promotions from BBC Studios by email. Your information will be handled in accordance with the BBC Studios privacy policy: *bbcstudios.com/privacy. – bbc.com/editorialguidelines/guidance/code-of-conduct*

Solution to our March 2020 crossword

Across 5 Thug 6 Hatshepsut 10 Cossack 11 Russell 12 Texel 13 Runes 15 Lee 16/7 Silent Spring 18 Walyer 22 NUM 23 Scone 24 Iliad 26 Segrave 28 Trapper 29 Bushranger 30/8 Mary Shelley

Down 1 Sussex 2 Falkirk 3 Hess 4 Attlee 5 Tacitus 9 Paulinus 14 Stari Ras 17 Limoges 19 Red Army 20 Boleyn 21 Bentley 22 Naseby 25 Imphal 27 Acre.

Six winners of *The Other Bennet Sister*

A Wilson, Greater Manchester; M Burkett, Worcester Park; H Bosher, West Lothian; J Whawell, Cornwall; M Elsworth, North Yorkshire; A Hutchesson, Gloucestershire

CROSSWORD COMPETITION TERMS & CONDITIONS

● The crossword competition is open to all residents of the UK (inc Channel Islands), aged 18 or over, except Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited employees or contractors, and anyone connected with the competition or their direct family members. By entering, participants agree to be bound by these terms and conditions and that their name and county may be released if they win. Only one entry permitted per person. ● The closing date and time is as shown under How to Enter, above. Entries received after that will not be considered. Entries cannot be returned. Entrants must supply full name, address and daytime phone number. Immediate Media Company (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) will not publish your personal details or provide them to anyone without permission. Read more about the Immediate Privacy Policy at *immediatemedia.co.uk/privacy policy/* ● The winning entrants will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. The prize and number of winners will be as shown on the Crossword page. There is no cash alternative and the prize will not be transferable. Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited's decision is final and no correspondence relating to the competition will be entered into. The winners will be notified by post within 20 days of the close of the competition. The name and county of residence of the winners will be published in the magazine within two months of the closing date. If the winner is unable to be contacted within one month of the closing date, Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited reserves the right to offer the prize to a runner up. ● Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited reserves the right to amend these terms and conditions, or to cancel, alter or amend the promotion at any stage, if deemed necessary in its opinion, or if circumstances arise outside of its control. The promotion is subject to the laws of England.

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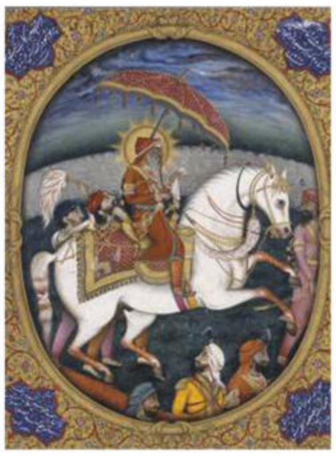
A brief history of hand-washing

As coronavirus spreads around the world, the public has received one key piece of advice: hand-washing is a very important defence. But what would our ancestors from centuries past have made of this notion? Katherine Harvey explains more.
historyextra.com/hand-washing



A great leader

Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780–1839) was founder of the Sikh empire. He forged a modern realm of toleration and famously owned the Koh-i-Noor diamond. He has just been voted the greatest leader in history in a poll by *BBC World Histories* magazine, so now is a great time to find out about his life.
historyextra.com/ranjit-singh

Madam CJ Walker

Self Made, a new Netflix series, has introduced many people to Madam CJ Walker's name for the first time. We caught up with her great-great-granddaughter, A'Lelia Bundles, to explore the real story of "the wealthiest self-made woman in America".
historyextra.com/madam-cj-walker

Censoring Anne Frank?

Frank's diary was first published in 1947 and her words are now immortalised as a symbol of the victims of the Holocaust. But was it the story Anne intended for us to read? Erin Blakemore considers how her diary has been edited and appropriated through history.
historyextra.com/censoring-anne-frank

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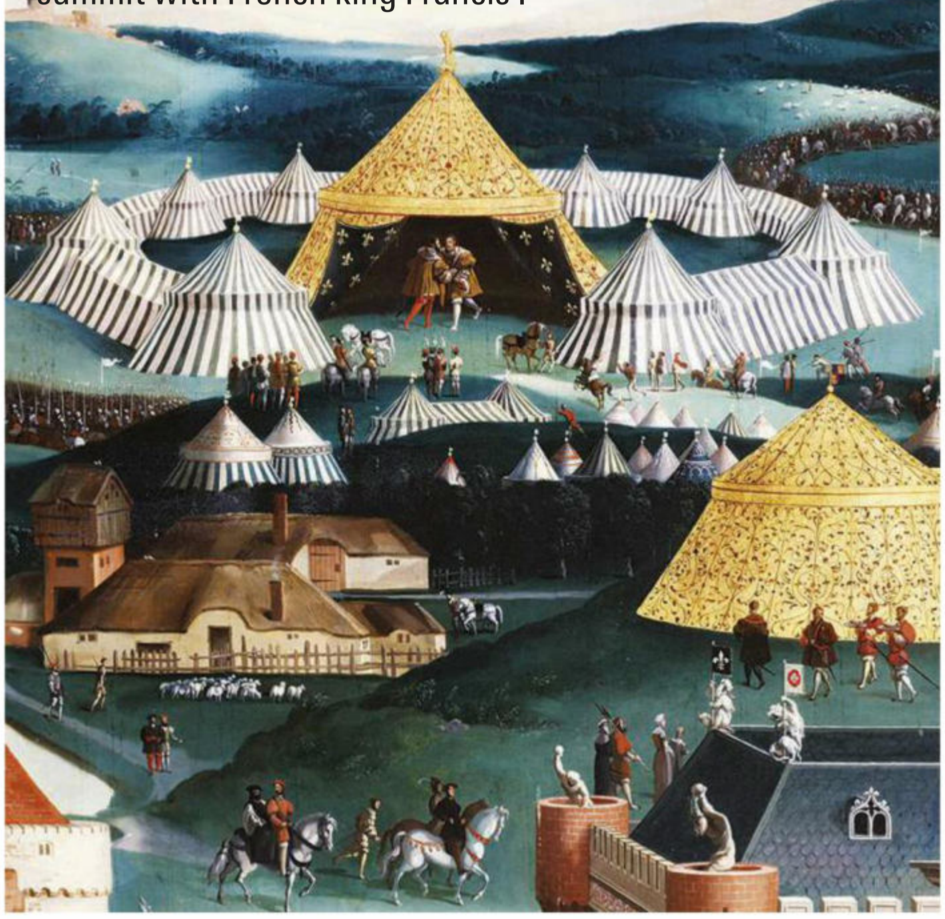
NEXT MONTH

June issue on sale 14 May 2020

The field of the cloth of gold

Glenn Richardson revisits Henry VIII's magnificent 1520 summit with French king Francis I



The last battle

Eric Lee on a 1945 clash in the Netherlands that continued even after the Second World War in Europe had ended

Greatest mysteries

Leading experts explore some of history's unanswered questions

Victorian inequality

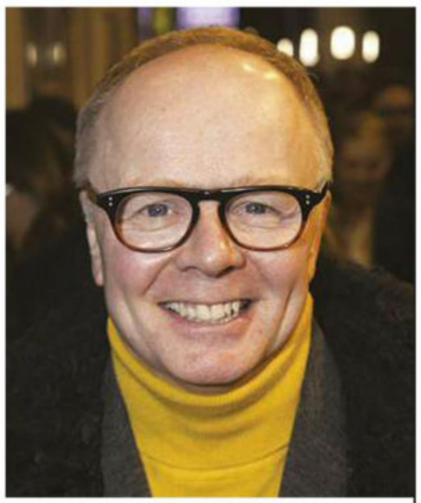
Emma Griffin on why increased prosperity didn't benefit working-class families

MY HISTORY HERO

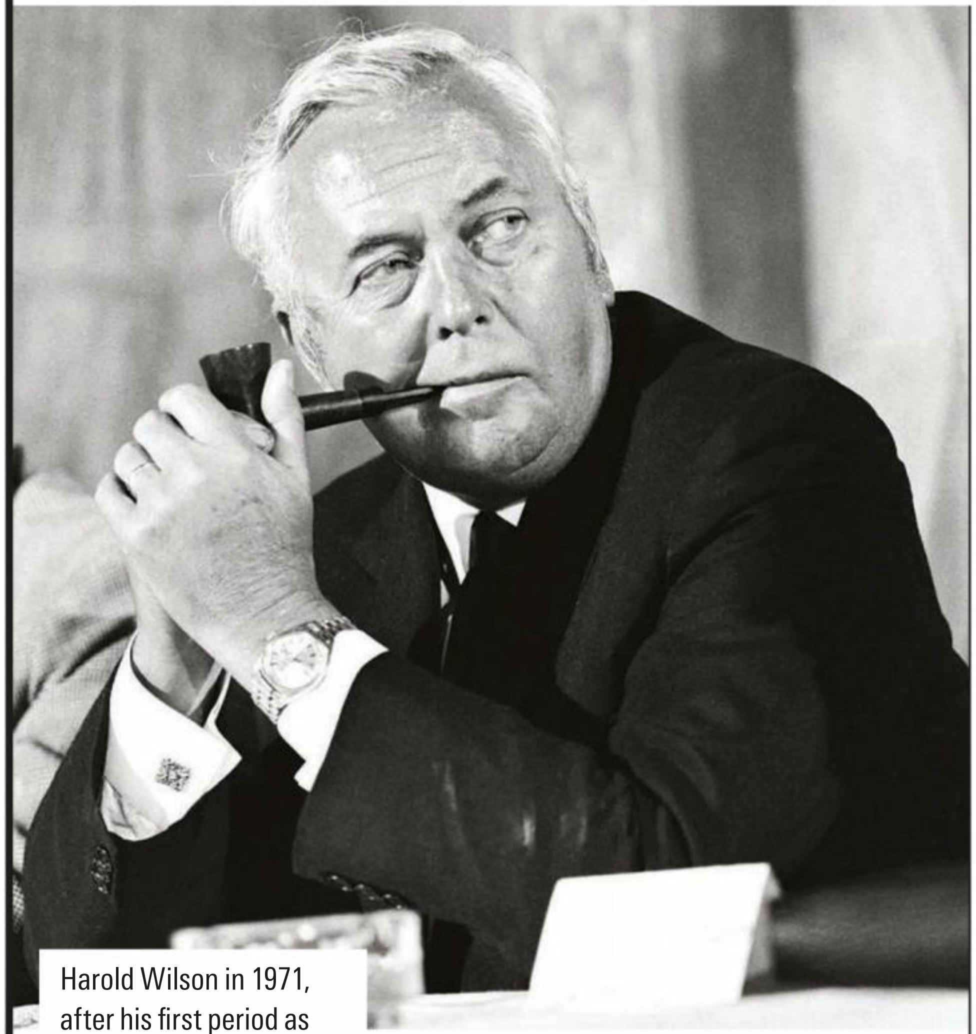
***Jason Watkins**, actor, chooses*

Harold Wilson

1916–95



Jason Watkins is a Bafta-winning actor. He's starred in *Line of Duty*, *Hold the Sunset* and *The Crown*



Harold Wilson in 1971, after his first period as prime minister. He would take power again in 1974

IN PROFILE

Harold Wilson was a Labour party leader who served as prime minister from 1964–70 and 1974–76. Born in Huddersfield, he studied at Oxford and became a Labour MP in 1945. He was made Labour leader in 1963 and went on to win four of the five general elections he fought. His first government, in particular, is remembered for its legislation advancing social justice. He resigned as premier in 1976 and his later years were blighted by Alzheimer's. His wife Mary only died in 2018, aged 102.

When did you first hear about Harold Wilson? I remember seeing him on our telly when I was a child. My mother was a Labour supporter and would have voted for him, but even as a boy I was aware that he divided opinion. Playing him in *The Crown*, and getting to revisit that era, was pretty fascinating.

What kind of person was he? He was very different to the previous two prime ministers, Harold Macmillan and Alec Douglas-Home, who were almost figures from the 19th century. He was a working-class, grammar school-educated boy who cut a much more modern figure; he had a quick wit, courted the Beatles and was a good media performer. He also had a warmth which made him the housewives' choice. But there was a degree of apprehension about him among 'old money'. I did a lot of research into Wilson before playing him and really felt I got to know the man under the skin. Interestingly, he was slightly sceptical about Europe…

What made Wilson a hero? I admire the fact that he started with nothing and made it to 10 Downing Street – no mean feat. I think he tried to do his best as prime minister at a difficult time for the country economically. As premier from 1964–70, he increased spending on education (he was acutely aware of its importance to social mobility), created the Open University and passed two landmark race relations acts, among other things. His government actively supported a bill decriminalising homosexuality. There is much to admire about his first six years as PM, and I think history has been unduly harsh on him.

What was Wilson's finest hour? First, taking hold of the Labour party and leading it to victory after 13 years of Conservative government. Second, being a moderniser, and realising the country couldn't be stuck in the past: his 1964–70 government passed a raft of laws that made Britain a fairer place. Third, keeping Britain out of the Vietnam War, despite the pressure put on him by the Americans. It's a shame a later Labour prime minister didn't follow his example.

Can you see any parallels between Wilson's life and your own? I see more parallels with my father, who also had a humble start in life (he was adopted as a boy), but got to Cambridge and became a scientist. I had my father very much in mind when I played Wilson.

If you could meet Wilson, what would you ask him? I'd love to know what he would make of today's political landscape, and today's Labour party. I think Labour would benefit from a leader like Wilson, who had both charisma and a very sharp mind.

Jason Watkins was talking to York Membery

> " He increased spending on education and passed a raft of laws that made Britain a fairer place, including two race relations acts "

LISTEN AGAIN

In Radio 4's **Great Lives**, guests choose inspirational figures: *bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qxsb*

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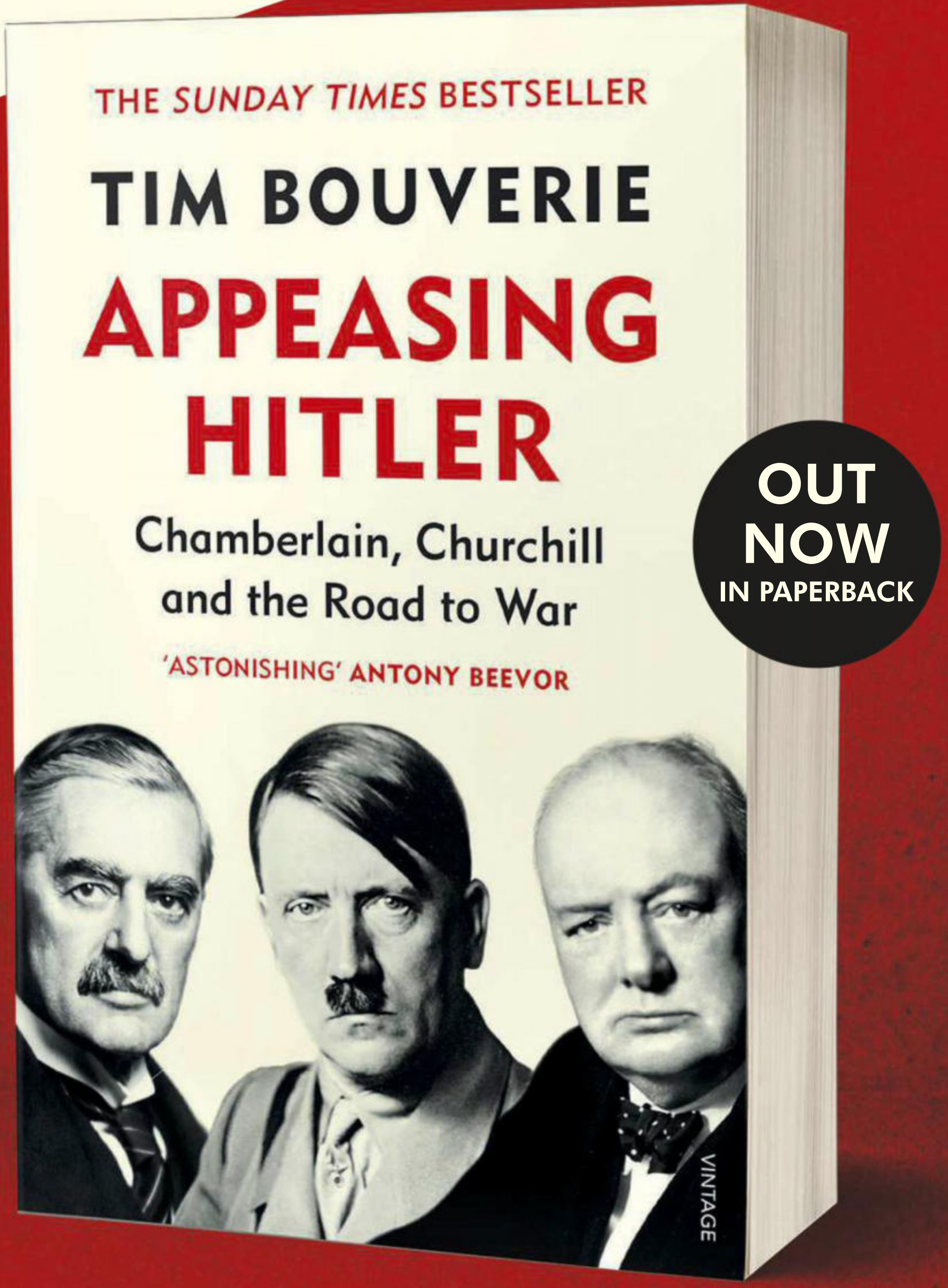
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